

## Der Zorn Gottes in der Prophetie und Poesie Israels auf dem Hintergrund altorientalischer Vorstellungen<sup>(1)</sup>

“Qui Deum amat, conari non potest ut Deus ipsum contra amet”  
(Baruch de Spinoza, *Ethica* V, Prop. XIX)

### I. Einleitung und Problemstellung

Das Thema des göttlichen Zorns bleibt in der jüdisch-christlichen Tradition aktuell, wie Buch-Veröffentlichungen der letzten Jahre zeigen<sup>(2)</sup>. Auch in der breiteren theologischen Meinungsbildung hat das Thema Konjunktur. Erinnert sei nur an die Diskussionen um die These von J. Assmann, monotheistische Religionen seien *ipso facto* gewaltbereiter als polytheistische, da die mosaische Unterscheidung zwischen dem wahren Gott und den falschen Göttern, also die zwischen JHWH und den Götzen, keine Toleranz und keinen Dialog dulde<sup>(3)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> Dieser Artikel geht auf einen Vortrag an der katholisch-theologischen Fakultät der Universität Münster am 10.11. 2003 zurück.

<sup>(2)</sup> G.H. HERION, “Wrath of God”, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York 1992) VI, 989-996; B.E. BALOIAN, *Anger in the Old Testament* (American University Studies Ser. 7, Theology and Religion 99; New York 1992); M.A. KLOPFENSTEIN, “Vom Zorn Gottes im Alten Testament”, *Leben aus dem Wort. Beiträge zum Alten Testament* (Hrsg. W. DIETRICH) (BEATAJ 40; Bern 1996) 199-202; W. GROSS, “Zorn Gottes – ein biblisches Theologumenon”, *Gott – ratlos vor dem Bösen?* (Hrsg. W. BEINERT) (QD 177; Freiburg i. Br. 1999) 47-85; R. MIGGELBRINK, *Der Zorn Gottes. Geschichte und Aktualität einer ungeliebten biblischen Tradition* (Freiburg i. Br. 2000); ID., *Der zornige Gott. Die Bedeutung einer anstößigen biblischen Tradition* (Darmstadt 2002); T.E. FRETHEIM, “Theological Reflections on the Wrath of God in the Old Testament”, *HBT* 24 (2002) 1-26; P.D. MILLER, “‘Slow to Anger’. The God of the Prophets”, *The Forgotten God. Perspectives in Biblical Theology* (Hrsg. A.A. DAS – F. MATERA) (Louisville 2002) 39-55; Th.L. THOMPSON, “Kingship and the wrath of God: Or teaching humility”, *RB* 109 (2002) 161-196.

<sup>(3)</sup> Die bisherige Diskussion zusammenfassend und weiterführend, J. ASSMANN, *Die mosaische Unterscheidung. Oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (München 2003); vgl. H.-G. STOBBE, “Monotheismus und Gewalt. Anmerkungen zu einigen Beispielen neuerer Religionskritik”, *Jahrbuch Politische Theologie* 4 (2002) 166-180.

Die Vorstellung vom Zorn Gottes ist im AT sehr vielfältig und breit gestreut, was in den "Theologien des AT" noch vielfach unterbelichtet bleibt<sup>(4)</sup>. Wie zentral das Thema des göttlichen Zornes ist, beweist allein schon die Tatsache, dass etwa 10 Substantive dieses Wortfeld markieren<sup>(5)</sup>. Eine kurze Zusammenfassung gibt W. Eichrodt: "Den Zornaffekt als innere Glut beschreiben חמה und חרון, seine Auswirkung gegen die Umgebung als ein Schnauben אף und רוח, als ein Schäumen und Überwallen עברה, זעם, זעף, als ein Losbrechen des Aufgestauten קצף"<sup>(6)</sup>. Bei der Verteilung auf den Zorn JHWHs bzw. den von Menschen zeigt sich ein deutlicher Unterschied zwischen dem verbalen Gebrauch (129×Gott; 91×Mensch) und der Verwendung der Nomina (389×Gott; 105×Mensch)<sup>(7)</sup>. Das alttestamentliche Zeugnis spricht demnach dreimal häufiger vom Zorn Gottes als vom zornigen Gott.

Des weiteren fällt auf, dass JHWHs Zorn in den Erzelternerzählungen der Genesis noch keine Rolle spielt, weder beim Sündenfall im Gottesgarten, noch beim Brudermord Kains, noch bei der Sintflut oder beim Turmbau zu Babel! Die einzige Stelle, an der im Buch Genesis vom Zorn JHWHs gesprochen wird, ist Gen 18,30.32, wo Abraham für die möglicherweise vorhandenen Gerechten in Sodom und Gomorra mit den Worten eintritt: "Zürne doch nicht (אל נא יחר), mein Herr, wenn ich weiterrede..."

Vom Zorn Gottes *in actu* ist im AT erstmalig im Kontext der Befreiung Israels aus Ägypten die Rede (Ex 4,13-14; 15,7-8). Anschließend begleitet sein Zorn den gesamten Wüstenzug (Num 32,13), ist präsent bei der Idolatrie vor dem goldenen Kalb (Ex 32,7-14) und findet seinen Höhepunkt in den Fluchandrohungen im Falle

<sup>(4)</sup> Ausführlicher nur bei W. EICHRODT, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen 1968) I, 168-176; G. von RAD, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (München Bd. I 1966; Bd. II 1965) geht nur sporadisch auf den göttlichen Zorn ein. Bei H.D. PREUSS, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart 1992) II, 288 findet sich nur eine halbe Seite; in der Trilogie von O. KAISER, *Der Gott des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen 1993; 1998; 2003) sucht man vergebens eine Auslegung zum Zorn Gottes.

<sup>(5)</sup> Siehe u.a. die einschlägigen Wörterbuchbeiträge, vgl. E. JOHNSON, "אף", *TWAT* I, 378-389; D.N. FREEDMAN – J. LUNDBLOM, "חרון", *TWAT* III, 183-188; K.-D. SCHUNCK, "חמה", *TWAT* II, 1032-1036; B. WIKLANDER, "זעם", *TWAT* II, 621-626; H. RINGGREN, "זעף", *TWAT* II, 627-628; K.-D. SCHUNCK, "עברה", *TWAT* V, 1033-1039; F.V. REITERER, "קצף", *TWAT* VII, 95-104; siehe auch den Exkurs bei U. BERGES, *Klagelieder* (HThKAT; Freiburg i.Br. 2002) 111-114.

<sup>(6)</sup> EICHRODT, *Theologie*, I, 168.

<sup>(7)</sup> Zählung nach BALOIAN, *Anger*, 189.

des Ungehorsams (Lev 26,14-39; Dtn 28,15-68; 29,22-28; Jos 23,6-16). Der altorientalische Hintergrund für die Rede vom Zorn JHWHs im Kontext des Bundesschlusses liegt in den neuassyrischen Treueiden des 7. Jhds v. Chr. (*adê*-Vereidigungen), die ihrerseits gattungsgeschichtlich auf die junghethitische Loyalitätseide aus dem 13. Jhd v. Chr. zurückgehen<sup>(8)</sup>. So heisst es im Treueid Asarhaddons (681-669 v. Chr.), den er von medischen Vasallen zugunsten seines zukünftigen, aber irregulären Thronnachfolgers Assurbanipal (669-627 v. Chr.) abverlangte, die Götter sollten ihnen Schreckliches antun, falls sie es an Loyalität fehlen ließen<sup>(9)</sup>.

Die deuteronomistische Schule beurteilt die gesamte Geschichte Israels aus der Perspektive des göttlichen Zorns (Dtn 32,16.19.21-22; 2 Kön 17,11.17-18; 23,26; 24,3-4)<sup>(10)</sup> und Gleiches gilt für die Mehrheit der Belege im *corpus propheticum*<sup>(11)</sup>. Im Psalter ist das Wortfeld mit rund 70 Einträgen stark vertreten<sup>(12)</sup>, aber den prozentual

<sup>(8)</sup> Siehe E. OTTO, *Das Deuteronomium*. Politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien (BZAW 284; Berlin 1999) 15-32; vgl. D.J. MCCARTHY, *Treaty and Covenant*. A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament (AnBib 21A; Rom 1978); K. WATANABE, *Die adê-Vereidigung anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons* (Baghdader Mitteilungen 3; Berlin 1987); S. PARPOLA – K. WATANABE (Hrsg.), *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Oaths* (State Archives of Assyria 2; Helsinki 1988); H.U. STEYMAN, *Deuteronomium 28 und die adê zur Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons*. Segen und Fluch im Alten Orient und in Israel (OBO 145; Fribourg 1995).

<sup>(9)</sup> Siehe u.a. R. BORGER, "Die Vasallenverträge Asarhaddons mit medischen Fürsten", *TUAT* I/2, 160-176 (bes. §56); K.R. VEENHOF, *Geschichte des Alten Orients bis zur Zeit Alexanders des Großen* (ATD Ergänzungsreihe 11; Göttingen 2001) 270-271, hält den Vertrag Asarhaddons mit Baal von Tyrus für einen noch besseren Vergleichstext (Übers. BORGER, "Die Vasallenverträge Asarhaddons", 158-159).

<sup>(10)</sup> D.J. MCCARTHY, "The Wrath of Yahweh and the Structural Unity of the Deuteronomistic History", *Essays in Old Testament Ethics* (Hrsg. J.L. CRENSHAW – J.T. WILLIS) (New York 1974) 97-110; K. LATVUS, *God, Anger and Ideology*. The Anger of God in Joshua and Judges in Relation to Deuteronomy and the Priestly Writings (JSOTSS 279; Sheffield 1998); N. LOHFINK, "Der Zorn Gottes und das Exil. Beobachtungen am deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk", *Liebe und Gebot*. Studien zum Deuteronomium. Festschrift L. Perlitt (Hrsg. R.G. KRATZ) (FRLANT 190; Göttingen 2000) 137-155.

<sup>(11)</sup> Siehe u.a. Jes 5,25; Jer 4,4.8.26; 7,20.29; Ez 5,13.15; Hos 8,5; 13,11; Am 1,11; Mi 7,9.18; Nah 1,3.6; Hab 3,8.12; Zef 1,15.18; 2,2.3; Sach 1,2.12; 7,12; 10,3.

<sup>(12)</sup> Siehe besonders den Zorn Gottes in Pss 2; 7; 38; 78; 79; 85; 88; 89; 90; 103; 106.

höchsten Anteil hat das Buch der Klagelieder<sup>(13)</sup>. Die Weisheit Israels hält gemäß ihrer erzieherischen Ausrichtung ein Lob für die bereit, die "langsam zum Zorn" sind, d.h. die ihren Zorn unter Kontrolle halten<sup>(14)</sup>.

Auf einen wesentlichen Unterschied zwischen der Verwendung des Zornmotivs in der Prophetie und den Psalmen sei bereits an dieser Stelle hingewiesen. Er liegt darin, dass der Nexus zwischen menschlicher Sünde und göttlichem Zorn, den das DtrGW und die Prophetie stark betonen, im Psalter in den Hintergrund tritt<sup>(15)</sup>. Wichtiger sind den exilisch-nachexilischen Volksklagen das "Warum?" (Ps 74,1) und "Wie lange?" des göttlichen Zorns (79,5; 80,5; 85,6; 89,47).

Dass die Vorstellung vom Zorn JHWHs nicht an der Peripherie der Gottesrede im AT, sondern in ihrem Zentrum steht, ist nicht zuletzt an der Selbstoffenbarung JHWHs an Mose in Ex 34,6-7 abzulesen<sup>(16)</sup>. Ohne diese Formel, die sowohl in der alt-<sup>(17)</sup> und neutestamentlichen<sup>(18)</sup> Überlieferung als auch in der jüdischen Tradition der 13 *middot*, der dreizehn göttlichen Eigenschaften, eine große Rolle spielt, im Einzelnen zu analysieren, fällt auf, dass die Elemente "langsam zum Zorn" (אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם) und "reich an beständiger Güte" (רַב־חֶסֶד) immer nebeneinander stehen. Der Rede von Gottes beständiger Treue geht ausnahmslos die von seiner "Langsamkeit zum Zorn" voraus (LXX: μακροθυμος; Vg: patiens). Das in den englischen Bibel-Übersetzungen geläufige "slow to anger" drückt das Gemeinte viel besser aus als die deutsche Wiedergabe "langmütig", die jede Dramatik des von JHWH zurückgehaltenen Zornes vermissen lässt<sup>(19)</sup>.

<sup>(13)</sup> Zorn Gottes in Klagl 1,12; 2,1.2.3.4.6.21.22; 3,1.43.66; 4,11; 5,22.

<sup>(14)</sup> Vgl. Spr 14,29; 15,18; 16,32; 25,15; Koh 7,8; zum göttlichen Zorn in der Weisheit, siehe u.a. Spr 11,4.23; 22,14; 24,18; Koh 5,5; Job 4,9; 9,5.13; 20,23.28; 21,17.20.30; 42,7.

<sup>(15)</sup> So ist der göttliche Zorn in den Volksklageliedern nur in Ps 79,5; 85,4 durch Israels Schuld motiviert; anders der Nexus von menschlicher Schuld und göttlichem Zorn in den Geschichts- bzw. Lehrpsalmen Ps 78 und 106.

<sup>(16)</sup> R. SCORALICK, *Gottes Güte und Gottes Zorn*. Die Gottesprädikationen in Ex 34,6f und ihre intertextuellen Beziehungen zum Zwölfprophetenbuch (HBS 33; Freiburg i. Br. 2002); H. SPIEKERMANN, "Barmherzig und gnädig ist der Herr...", in: *Gottes Liebe zu Israel*. Studien zur Theologie des Alten Testaments (FAT 33; Tübingen 2001) 3-19 [erstveröffentlicht in ZAW 102 (1990, 1-18)]; id., "God's Steadfast Love. Towards a New Conception of Old Testament Theology", *Bib* 81 (2000) 305-327.

<sup>(17)</sup> Ex 34,6-7; Ps 86,15; 103,8; 145,8; Joel 2,13; Jon 4,2; Neh 9,17.[31].

<sup>(18)</sup> Vgl. Lk 6,36; Joh 1,14-16; Jak 5,11.

<sup>(19)</sup> Anders SPIEKERMANN, *Barmherzig*, 4, der zu Ex 34,6-7 meint, "langsam zum Zorn" füge keinen eigenen Akzent hinzu und friedfertiger ließe sich vom göttlichen Zorn kaum reden.



Der vorliegende Beitrag will die Vielschichtigkeit der Rede vom Zorn Gottes, besonders in der Prophetie und Poesie Israels beleuchten<sup>(20)</sup>. Dabei wird der Blick auf einige altorientalische Vorstellungen vom Zorn der Gottheit zeigen, wie aktiv sich das biblische Israel an seiner kulturellen Umwelt beteiligt und wie kreativ es sich mit deren Einflüssen auseinandergesetzt hat. Als akademische Disziplin hat die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft m.E. die Aufgabe, diese Assimilationen, Transpositionen und Transformationen aufzuarbeiten und die so erschlossenen Ergebnisse in den theologischen Diskurs miteinzubringen<sup>(21)</sup>.

## II. Der religionsgeschichtliche Kontext der zürnenden Gottheit

Überblickt man die Belege vom Zorn der Götter im altorientalischen Raum<sup>(22)</sup>, die Vergleichspunkte zum Zorn JHWHs im AT bieten<sup>(23)</sup>, so lassen sich vier Kategorien unterscheiden<sup>(24)</sup>:

1. der die Menschheit zu vernichten suchende Zorn der Gottheit
2. der in die Geschehnisse der Völker eingreifende Zorn der Gottheit
3. der Tempelstädte samt den Heiligtümern zerstörende Zorn der Gottheit
4. der den Einzelnen in Todesnot stürzende Zorn der Gottheit.

<sup>(20)</sup> Die klassischen Belege zu den "dunklen Seiten Gottes" sind nicht Gegenstand dieser Untersuchung (vgl. Gen 32,23-33; Ex 4,24-26; Ex 12,12; 2 Sam 6,6-9; 2 Sam 24,1); dazu P. VOLZ, *Das Dämonische in Jahwe* (Tübingen 1924); DIETRICH – LINK, *Die dunklen Seiten Gottes*; S. KRAHE, *Ermordete Kinder und andere Geschichten von Gottes Unmoral* (Würzburg 1999); M. VERVENNE, "Violent Imagery in the Hebrew Bible: Satanic verses or Anti-metaphors?", *Textarbeit. Studien zu Texten und ihrer Rezeption aus dem Alten Testament und der Umwelt Israels*. Festschrift P. Weimar (Hrsg. K. KIESOW – Th. MEURER) (AOAT 294; Münster 2003) 523-544.

<sup>(21)</sup> Diese Geschichts- und Kulturbezogenheit steht weder dem geistigen Schriftverständnis, noch der kanonisch-intertextuellen Auslegung im Wege; kritischer dagegen L. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, "Einheit statt Eindeutigkeit. Paradigmenwechsel in der Bibelwissenschaft?", *HerKorr* 57 (2003) 412-417.

<sup>(22)</sup> Vgl. *Kleine Encyclopedie van de Toorn* (Hrsg. A. de JONG) (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks 21; Utrecht 1993).

<sup>(23)</sup> Der Zorn der Götter untereinander kann hier außer Acht bleiben; die Mythologie Ugarits betreffend, M.C.A. KORPEL, *A Rift in the Clouds*. Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine (UBL 8; Münster 1990) 172-175; J.C. de MOOR, "Theodicy in the Texts of Ugarit", *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (Hrsg. A. LAATO – J. C. de MOOR) (Leiden 2003) 108-150.

<sup>(24)</sup> Anders J. ASSMANN, *Herrschaft und Heil*. Politische Theologie in Ägypten, Israel und Europa (München 2000) 53-54, der zwischen "ökonomischem", "geschichtlichem" und "apokalyptischem" Zorn unterscheidet.

### 1. *Der die Menschheit zu vernichten suchende Zorn der Götter*

Im altbabylonischen Atramchasis-Mythos (19.-17. Jhd. v. Chr.)<sup>(25)</sup> führt der Sturmgott Enlil eine Allianz aufgebrachter Götter an, die sich durch die stark vermehrte und die nächtliche Ruhe störende Menschheit belästigt fühlt. Erst wird versucht, die Menschheit durch Strafmaßnahmen zu dezimieren, um sie schließlich durch eine gewaltige Flut zu vernichten.

[Enlil hörte] nun ihr Geschrei;  
[er sprach] zu den großen Göttern:  
[>>Zu lästig wurde mir] das Geschrei der Menschen;  
[infolge ihres lauten Tuns] entbehre ich den Schlaf.  
[Gebt Befehl, daß ein Käl]tefieber aufkomme. (Taf. I, Z. 356-360)

Nur durch die trickreiche Hilfe und Unterstützung des Gottes Enki rettet sich der Flutheld Atramchasis ("der an Weisheit Übergroße") mit Tieren und seiner Familie aus der Flutkatastrophe. Damit Enlil nichts bemerken soll, spricht Enki nicht direkt zu Atramchasis, sondern durch die dünne Wand einer Schilfhütte:

[Enki] tat seinen Mund auf  
und sprach zu seinem Diener...  
'Wand, höre gut hin auf mich;  
Schilfhütte, merke dir alle meine Worte!  
Trenn dich von deinem Haus, baue ein Schiff!  
verschmähe den Besitz, erhalte dafür dein Leben!'  
(Taf. III, Kol. I Z. 15-24)

Gerade noch rechtzeitig vor dem Losbrechen der Naturgewalten wird die rettende Arche fertig gestellt:

Des Tages Aussehen änderte sich;  
(denn) mit einem Mal brüllte Adad in den Wolken.  
Des Gottes Stimme hörten sie;  
da ward das Erdpech gebracht, daß er die Tür abdichte.  
Als er ihre Tür verriegelt hatte,  
brüllte Adad in den Wolken.  
Der Wind tobte bei seinem Aufbruch;  
da zerschnitt er (=Atramchasis) das Tau (und) legte das Schiff ab.  
(Taf. III, Kol. II Z. 48-55)

Die Auswirkungen der Flut sind so verheerend, dass es die Götter selbst, allen voran die Muttergöttin Nintu/ Mami, mit der Angst zu tun bekommen und ihren Vernichtungsbeschluss bedauern:

<sup>(25)</sup> Einleitung und Übersetzung von W. VON SODEN, "Der altbabylonische Atramchasis-Mythos", *TUAT* III/4 (Gütersloh 1994) 612-645.

Nintu, der großen Herrin, Lippen  
 verhüllen ihre Verängstigung...  
 Die Göttin sah (es), weint,  
 sie, die Hebamme der Götter, die weise Mami.  
 Der Tag soll immer wieder finster werden;  
 erneut werde er ganz dunkel!  
 Wie konnte ich in der Versammlung der Götter  
 mit ihnen den endgültigen Befehl geben! (Taf. III, Kol. III, Z. 28-38)

Als Enlil nach der Flut bemerkt, dass sein Plan zur Vernichtung der Menschheit fehlgeschlagen ist, reagiert er zuerst sehr erbost, doch schließlich erteilt er Enki und der Muttergöttin den Auftrag zur Neuschöpfung von Menschen. Dabei sollten sie zugleich auch die kindermordende Dämonin Lamaschtum erschaffen und so dafür sorgen, dass es nicht mehr zu einer solch übermäßigen Vermehrung der Menschen komme<sup>(26)</sup>. Diese präventive Maßnahme soll von vornherein einem erneuten Zorn Enlils jegliche Grundlage entziehen.

Im jüngeren Gilgameschepos (12-Tafel-Epos ca. 12. Jhd. v. Chr.) ist in der 11. Tafel das Thema der Sintflut aus dem Atramchasismythos aufgenommen, aber an einigen Punkten abgeändert. So heißt der Flutheld nicht mehr Atramchasis, sondern Utnapischtim. Dieser berichtet als Augenzeuge von der verheerenden Flut, für die keine Begründung mehr gegeben wird. Der Rettergott ist nicht mehr Enki, sondern Ea und die Muttergöttin ist nicht Nintu/ Mami, sondern Ishtar/ Mach. In seiner Monographie zur Komposition der Urgeschichte stellte N.C. Baumgart heraus, wie sich die drei Verhaltensweisen der mesopotamischen Götter im Flutmythos, nämlich a.) Vernichtung und Zerstörung des Lebens (Enlil), b.) Hilfe und Errettung aus der Not (Enki/ Ea) und c.) Reue, Mitleiden der Muttergottheit (Nintu/ Mami bzw. Ishtar/ Mach) in JHWH, dem Gott Israels, monotheistisch vereinigt wiederfinden<sup>(27)</sup>. So ordnet JHWH die Vernichtung allen Lebens an (Gen 6,5-7), bewahrt den Fluthelden Noach in der Katastrophe (Gen 6,8; 7,1-4) und verspricht nach der Flut, eine solche niemals wieder zu verhängen (Gen 8,21-22). Die große Verbreitung des Flutmythos von der altbabylonischen bis zur hellenistischen Zeit macht es wahrscheinlich, dass die Rezipienten der biblischen Sintfluterzählung um die Vereinigung der unterschiedlichen

<sup>(26)</sup> VON SODEN, *Atramchasis-Mythos*, 617.

<sup>(27)</sup> N.C. BAUMGART, *Die Umkehr des Schöpfungsgottes*. Zu Komposition und religionsgeschichtlichem Hintergrund von Gen 5-9 (HBS 22; Freiburg i.Br. 1999) 490-495; ID., "Die große Flut und die Arche", *BiKi* 58 (2003) 30-36.

Rollen in JHWH wussten<sup>(28)</sup>. Wichtiger ist jedoch die Tatsache, dass in Gen 6–9, anders als in den altorientalischen Vorlagen, vom Zorn der Gottheit, d.h. JHWHs, *keine* Rede ist! Darin unterscheidet sich dieser von Enki und Enlil, wie auch vom Pest- und Kriegsgott Erra, der im gleichnamigen akkadischen Epos die Vernichtung der Menschheit im Zorn anordnet<sup>(29)</sup> oder von der blutrünstigen Göttin Hathor im Ägyptischen Buch von der Himmelskuh<sup>(30)</sup>.

Diese Auslassung des göttlichen Zorns in der biblischen Fluterzählung ist nicht zufällig: JHWH nimmt zwar am Erbe der altorientalischen Götterwelt teil, *nicht* aber in dem Sinne einer aus Zorn die Vernichtung der Menschheit anordnenden Gottheit. So heisst es in Gen 6,6, an der Stelle, wo nach dem kulturellen Code der biblischen Umwelt vom menscheitsvernichtenden Zorn der Gottheit die Rede sein müsste, es habe JHWH gereut (נחם nif.), dass er die Menschheit auf Erden gemacht habe und in seinem Herzen (אִלֶּיב) geschmerzt (עצב hitp.). Beide Verben drücken hier die starke emotionale Betroffenheit JHWHs aus, der an seiner Schöpfung und ihrer Vernichtung leidet<sup>(31)</sup>. Im Gegensatz zu den Göttern der altorientalischen Umwelt, schmerzt JHWH sein Vernichtungsbeschluss nicht erst *post factum*, sondern bereits *vor* der Katastrophe. Nicht aus Zorn, sondern in tiefer Anteilnahme ringt sich JHWH zur Vernichtung der Menschheit durch<sup>(32)</sup>.

Die Vermutung, das Zorn-Motiv sei in Gen 6 bewusst ausgelassen worden, wird durch die beiden einzigen Stellen im corpus propheticum bestätigt, die auf die Fluterzählung Bezug nehmen und zwar unter Nennung des göttlichen Zorns. So gibt JHWH in Jes 26,20 in eschatologischer Heilsperspektive den Auftrag: „Auf mein Volk, geh in deine Kammern und verschließ die Tür hinter dir! Verbirg dich für kurze Zeit, bis der Zorn vergangen ist“ (עַד-יֵעָבֹר זַעַם). Dabei stellt der Nahkontext mehrfach Bezüge zur Noacherzählung her: so findet sich in Jes 26,7-19 der Psalm des Gerechten, in Jes 27,1 die Vernichtung

<sup>(28)</sup> So U. RÜTERSWORDEN, *Dominium terrae*. Studien zur Genese einer alttestamentlichen Vorstellung (BZAW 215; Berlin 1993) 38.

<sup>(29)</sup> Einleitung und Übersetzung von G.G.W. MÜLLER, „Ischum und Erra“, *TUAT* III/4, 781-801.

<sup>(30)</sup> Einleitung und Übersetzung von H. STERNBERG EL-HOTABI, „Der Mythos von der Vernichtung des Menschengeschlechtes“, *TUAT* III/5 (Gütersloh 1995) 1018-1037; dazu A. DE JONG, „Als Re vertoornd is...“, *Kleine Encyclopedie van de Toorn*, 95-105.

<sup>(31)</sup> So bezeichnet עצב/עצב in Gen 3,16.17 und 5,29 die Geburtsschmerzen der Frau und die Mühen des Mannes bei der Feldarbeit.

<sup>(32)</sup> BAUMGART, *Umkehr*, 135-140.

Leviathans, des Urmonsters, das als aquatisches Wesen der Sintflut einst entkommen war und in 27,2-5 ist vom neuen Weinberg die Rede, analog zum Weinberg, den Noach unmittelbar nach seiner Errettung anlegte (Gen 9,20)<sup>(33)</sup>.

In Jes 54,8-9 wendet sich JHWH seiner durch ihn verlassenen Braut Zion zu, und zwar mit explizitem Bezug auf seinen Zorn, indem er betont, die Abwendung von seinem Zorn in den Tagen Noachs würden auch für Zion gelten<sup>(34)</sup>.

Anders als in Gen 6,6, wo JHWHs Zorn ungenannt bleibt, ist in Jes 54,8-9 dieser Zorn in heilsgeschichtlicher Perspektive betont. Die nächstfolgende Stelle vom göttlichen Zorn im Jesajabuch zielt auf die Zurückhaltung dieses Zorns wegen der geschöpflichen Vergänglichkeit des Menschen ab (Jes 57,16)<sup>(35)</sup>. Der implizite und explizite Rückgriff auf die Noacherzählung im Buch Jesaja mit der ausdrücklichen Nennung des göttlichen Zornes deutet darauf hin, dass dieses Motiv in der urgeschichtlichen Fluterzählung bewusst ausgespart und durch JHWHs emotionale Betroffenheit bei der Vernichtung der Menschheit ersetzt worden ist. Erst in heilsgeschichtlicher Perspektive kommt dieser Zorn wieder ins Bild, und zwar als in JHWH selbst überwundene Macht zum Tod. Die Kombination vom Zorn JHWHs mit dem Vergänglichkeitsmotiv unterstreicht die todbringenden Folgen des göttlichen Zorns.

## 2. Der in die Geschichte der Völker eingreifende Zorn der Gottheit

Die altorientalischen Götter können nicht nur der Menschheit, sondern auch einzelnen Völkern und selbst ihren eigenen Nationen zürnen<sup>(36)</sup>. In diesem Sinn sprechen auch die Schriftpropheten vom Zorn JHWHs, der sich sowohl gegen die Fremdvölker, als auch gegen das Bundesvolk richten kann<sup>(37)</sup>. Nach Ez 22,30-31 hätte der

<sup>(33)</sup> U. BERGES, *Das Buch Jesaja*. Komposition und Endgestalt (HBS 16; Freiburg i.Br. 1998) 194-195.

<sup>(34)</sup> Außer in Gen 5-10 kommt Noach nur noch in Jes 54,9; Ez 14,14.20 und 1 Chr 1,4 vor.

<sup>(35)</sup> J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66* (AB 19B; New York 2003) 172: "The point seems to be that indefinite exposure to the divine anger would reduce that divinely originating essence, resulting in weakness and eventually in death".

<sup>(36)</sup> Dazu immer noch wegweisend B. ALBREKTSON, *History and the Gods*. An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events as Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and in Israel (CB.OT 1; Lund 1967).

<sup>(37)</sup> H. RINGGREN, "Einige Schilderungen des göttlichen Zornes", *Tradition und Situation*. Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie. Festschrift A. Weiser

zerstörerische Zorn JHWHs noch aufgehalten werden können, falls sich jemand gefunden hätte, der für das Land in die Bresche getreten wäre (עמד בפרץ), doch diese Suche war vergeblich gewesen (vgl. Ez 13,5)<sup>(38)</sup>.

Diese Art des göttlichen Zornes qualifiziert J. Assmann als politischen Affekt, der JHWH in seiner Königsrolle zuwachse und alles andere als ein Überbleibsel unreflektierter Leidenschaftlichkeit sei, sondern letztlich auf der hochkulturellen Idee der Gerechtigkeit beruhe: "Es ist der Zorn des Richters, der rettend eingreift, und der Zorn des Herrschers, der den abtrünnigen Vasallen trifft"<sup>(39)</sup>. So hält er den Zorn Gottes geradezu für den Vorläufer der legitimen politischen Gewalt, der "potestas", nicht der "violencia".

In der Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab aus der Mitte des 9. Jhd. v. Chr. heißt es, Omri, der König von Israel habe Moab lange Zeit unterdrücken können, weil Kamosch, der Gott Moabs, seinem Lande zürnte (vgl. 2 Kön 3,4-5)<sup>(40)</sup>.

In der babylonischen Steintafelinschrift des Königs Nabuapalidinna (888-855 v. Chr.) führt dieser die Eroberung der Stadt Sippar durch die Sütäer und den Verlust der Statue des Sonnengottes Schamasch auf eben diesen Zorn zurück:

Schamasch, der große Herr, der seit langer Zeit mit Akkad zürnte und seinen Nacken abgewandt hatte, unter der Regierung des Nabuapalidinna, des Königs von Babylon, erwies er Gnade und wandte sein Gesicht wieder [= Sippar] zu (Kol. III, 11-18)<sup>(41)</sup>.

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(Hrsg. E. WÜRTHEIN – O. KAISER) (Göttingen 1963) 107-113; C. WESTERMANN, "Boten des Zorns. Der Begriff des Zornes Gottes in der Prophetie", *Die Botschaft und die Boten*. Festschrift H.W. Wolff (Hrsg. J. JEREMIAS – L. PERLITT) (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981) 147-156; MILLER, "'Slow to Anger'. The God of the Prophets", 39-55.

<sup>(38)</sup> Dazu Chr. SCHROEDER, "'Standing in the Breach'. Turning Away the Wrath of God", *Int* 52 (1998) 16-23.

<sup>(39)</sup> ASSMANN, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 54. Vgl. Lactantius, *De ira dei* 23,14: "ubi ergo ira non fuerit, imperium quoque non erit. deus autem habet imperium, ergo et iram, qua constat imperium, habeat necesse est"; dazu M. POHLENZ, *Vom Zorne Gottes. Eine Studie über den Einfluß der griechischen Philosophie auf das alte Christentum* (FRLANT 12; Göttingen 1909) 48-57; R. VAN DEN BROEK, "Deus habet imperium, ergo et iram: Lactantius over de toorn van God", *Kleine Encyclopedie van de Toorn*, 29-42.

<sup>(40)</sup> Einleitung und Übersetzung von H.-P. MÜLLER, "Die Inschriften des Königs Mesa von Moab", *TUAT I/6* (Gütersloh 1985) 646-650; vgl. die Rolle JHWHs in Ri 2,14; 3,8; 10,7-8; auch Ps 106,40-42.

<sup>(41)</sup> Übersetzung A. BERLEJUNG, *Die Theologie der Bilder*. Herstellung und Einweihung von Kultbildern in Mesopotamien und die alttestamentliche

In der Babylon-Inschrift des assyrischen Königs Asarhaddon (681-669 v. Chr.)<sup>(42)</sup> begründet dieser die furchtbare Zerstörung der Stadt und die Deportation der Marduk-Statue nach Assur durch seinen Vater Sanherib (705-681 v. Chr.) im Jahre 689 v. Chr. mit dem Zorn des babylonischen Hochgottes Marduk<sup>(43)</sup>. Der hatte sich an den sozialen, politischen und kultischen Missständen in Babylon entzündet: "Da ergrimte der Enlil (Herr) der Götter, Marduk; um das Land niederzuwerfen und seine Bewohnerschaft zu verderben, sann er Böses"<sup>(44)</sup>. Wichtig ist hierbei, dass das Motiv vom Zorn Marduks von Asarhaddon als politische Strategie eingesetzt worden ist, um die Zerstörungswut seines Vaters Sanherib an Babylon zu rechtfertigen<sup>(45)</sup>. Erst nachdem sich Marduks Zorn gelegt und er selbst die Zeit der Entvölkerung verkürzt hatte, konnte Babylon wieder erbaut werden: "Obgleich er 70 Jahre als die Frist seiner Entvölkerung (auf die Schicksalstafeln) geschrieben hatte, hat der barmherzige Marduk, nachdem sein Herz alsbald zur Ruhe gekommen war, die Ziffern vertauscht und seine Wiederbebauung im 11. Jahre befohlen" (Version a)<sup>(46)</sup>.

Im gleichen Sinn äußert sich der letzte neubabylonische König Nabonid (ca. 556-539 v. Chr.) auf der sogenannten Babel-Stele, auf der er Sanherib in dunkelsten Farben zeichnete:

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Bilderpolemik (OBO 162; Fribourg 1998) 143. Zur Hinwendung des Nackens und nicht des Gesichtes als Zeichen göttlichen Zornes, vgl. Jer 18,17.

<sup>(42)</sup> Neue englische Übersetzung von W.W. HALLO, *The Context of Scripture* (Hrsg. W.W. HALLO) (Leiden 2000) II, 306.

<sup>(43)</sup> Vgl. die Marduk-Prophetie aus der Zeit Nebukadnezar I. (1124-1103 v. Chr.), in der Marduk sich entscheidet, nach Elam ins Exil zu gehen, um anschließend in seine Thronstadt zurückzukehren; Einleitung und Übersetzung von K. HECKER, "Die Marduk-Prophetie", *TUAT II/1* (Gütersloh 1986) 65-68.

<sup>(44)</sup> R. BORGER, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (AfO.B 9; Graz 1956) 13; dazu R. ALBERTZ, *Die Exilszeit*. 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (Biblische Enzyklopädie 7; Stuttgart 2001) 48.

<sup>(45)</sup> W. MAYER, "Die Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels 587 v. Chr. im Kontext der Praxis von Heiligtumszerstörungen im antiken Vorderen Orient", *Zerstörungen des Jerusalemer Tempels*. Geschehen – Wahrnehmung – Bewältigung (Hrsg. J. HAHN) (WUNT 147; Tübingen 2002) 11-12; K.R. VEENHOF, *Geschichte des Alten Orients bis zur Zeit Alexanders des Großen* (ATD Ergänzungsreihe 11; Göttingen 2001) 268-269.

<sup>(46)</sup> BORGER, *Inschriften*, 15; dazu M. ALBANI, *Der eine Gott und die himmlischen Heerscharen*. Zur Begründung des Monotheismus bei Deuterojesaja im Horizont der Astralisierung des Gottesverständnisses im Alten Orient (Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 1; Leipzig 2000) 87, Anm. 341: Zahl 70=vertikaler Keil + Winkelhaken; Zahl 11 = Winkelhaken + vertikaler Keil.

Babels Heiligtümer richtete er böse zu. Die Bildwerke brachte er in Unordnung, die Kultordnungen richtete er zugrunde. Die Hand des Fürsten Marduk erfaßte er und führte ihn ab nach Baltila. Gemäß dem Zorn des Gottes verfuhr er mit dem Lande, seinen Groll löste er nicht. Der Fürst Marduk schlug 21 Jahre in Baltila seinen Wohnsitz auf. Da waren die Tage erfüllt, der Termin war gekommen. Es beruhigte sich der Zorn des Königs der Götter, des Herrn der Herren. Er gedachte Esagils und Babels, des Sitzes seiner Herrschaft<sup>(47)</sup>.

Die Parallele mit der 100 Jahre später erfolgten Zerstörung Jerusalems im Jahre 587 v. Chr. durch die Neu-Babylonier liegt auf der Hand. Der Zorn JHWHs hatte sich an der Sündigkeit seines Volkes so entzündet, dass er die neubabylonische Großmacht unter der Leitung Nebukadnezars, "meines Knechtes" (עבדִי) (Jer 25,9), dazu bestellte, Juda und Jerusalem für 70 Jahre<sup>(48)</sup> zu verwüsten (Jer 25,11-12; 29,10; vgl. Dan 9,2.24).

Dass JHWH die Großmächte Assur und Babel als Werkzeuge seines Zornes einsetzte, betont die Schriftprophetie Israels, aber auch, dass diese Großmächte ihren Auftrag zur Bestrafung Israels überzogen und daher ihrerseits JHWHs Zorn auf sich herabriefen. Diese Anklage gilt besonders Assur, dem "Stock meines Zornes" (שבט־אפי) (Jes 10,5-7; vgl. 14,24-27). Aber auch die nachfolgende Großmacht Babel blieb nicht vom göttlichen Zorn verschont, denn auch sie erhob sich über den eigentlichen Auftrag JHWHs, sein Volk zu bestrafen (Jes 47,6-7).

In Sach 1,15 ist die Anklage auf die Fremdvölker insgesamt ausgeweitet, denn JHWH ist voll glühendem Zorn gegen sie (וּקְצַף גְּדוֹל אֲנִי קֶצֶף). Er war nur ein wenig erzürnt über sein eigenes Volk (אֲנִי קֶצַפְתִּי מֵעַם), doch die Fremdvölker wollten nichts anderes als Vernichtung, als sie ihm zur Hand gingen<sup>(49)</sup>.

Die Rede vom Zorn JHWHs erfährt in der Prophetie ihre Zuspitzung durch die Koppelung an das Motiv vom Tag JHWHs. In Am 5,18-20, dem ältesten Beleg des Motivs aus der Mitte des 8. Jhds, liegt diese Verbindung noch nicht vor und auch sonst spricht Amos nie explizit vom Zorn Gottes. Das ändert sich beim Propheten Zefanja in

<sup>(47)</sup> R. BORGER, "Aus der Babel-Stele Nabonids", *TUAT* I/4 (Gütersloh 1984) 407 (Baltila=Stadt Assur; Esagil=Haupttempel Marduks in Babel).

<sup>(48)</sup> Rechnet man von 597 (erste Deportation) bis zur ersten größeren Rückkehrbewegung unter Darius (521), ergibt sich ein Zeitraum von etwa 70 Jahren; vgl. ALBERTZ, *Exilszeit*, 102-112.

<sup>(49)</sup> JHWHs Zorn gegen Fremdvölker, vgl. Jer 10,10; 49,37 (Elam); Jer 50,13.25; 51,45 (Babel); Jes 34; 63,1-6; Jer 49,7-22; Ez 35,11; Mal 1,4 (Edom), Ez 38,18-23 (Gog).



der zweiten Hälfte des 7. Jhds v. Chr., denn dieser kündigt den Tag JHWHs als einen Tag des Zornes und der äußersten Not an (Zef 1,14-16; vgl. 2,2-3). Er wendet sich an Adressaten, die von JHWH und seinem Tag (1,10) weder "Gutes noch Böses" erwarten (1,12) und so die Geschichtsmächtigkeit JHWHs und sein Recht zum Zorn in Abrede stellen<sup>(50)</sup>.

Doch nicht nur in seinem Zorn bestimmt JHWH einen ausländischen Großkönig zur Zerstörung seines Landes und seiner Stadt, sondern auch sein Erbarmen wird durch einen Fremdherrscher, Kyros, seinen Gesalbten (למשיח) effekuiert (Jes 44,24-45,7; vgl. 41,1-5). Dass der Perser sich jedoch nicht durch JHWH, sondern durch Marduk berufen fühlte, unterstreicht der Kyros-Zylinder:

Zu allen Orten, deren Wohnsitz verfallen war, und den Bewohnern von Sumer und Akkad, die gleich Leichen geworden waren, wandte er (= Marduk) sein Gemüt zurück, er faßte Erbarmen. Alle Länder insgesamt musterte er, er prüfte (sie), er suchte einen gerechten Herrscher nach seinem Herzen, faßte ihn mit seiner Hand: Kyros, den König von Anshan, berief er, zur Herrschaft über das gesamte All sprach er seinen Namen aus<sup>(51)</sup>.

Dieser Text zeigt einmal mehr, wie analog zum Zorn auch das Erbarmen der Gottheit als eine politisch höchst wirksame Macht angesehen wurde.

Bei den Belegen vom göttlichen Zorn in der alttestamentlichen Prophetie fällt auf, dass JHWHs Zorn dort an seine Grenze stößt, wo die Existenz seines Volkes gefährdet ist. Er hält seinen Zorn hin (אחריך אפי), um seines eigenen Ruhmes willen und um sein Volk nicht völlig zu vernichten (לבלתי הכריחך) (Jes 48,8-9). Das Zurückhalten des Zornes meint nicht einfach die göttliche Langmut, sondern das in Gott selbst erkämpfte Hinauszögern bzw. Abschwächen seiner Gewaltbereitschaft (vgl. Jer 15,15; 18,25). So ringt sich die Prophetie *nach der Katastrophe* zur Hoffnung auf die verlässliche Treue JHWHs durch, denn er hält nicht für immer an seinem Zorn fest (לא החזיק לעד אפי), sondern liebt es, gnädig zu sein (כיחפץ חסד הוא) (Mi 7,18; vgl. Jes 49,10; 54,10; Jer 32,37; Sach 8,14-15; Jon 4,2; Hos 11,8-9; 14,5).

<sup>(50)</sup> H. SPIEKERMANN, "Dies Irae. Der alttestamentliche Befund und seine Vorgeschichte", ID., *Gottes Liebe zu Israel*, 39 [erstveröffentlicht in VT 39 (1989) 194-208]; gegen seine Ableitung vom "Tag des Zornes" in Zef 1,15 von der mesopotamischen Omenkunde (19. Tag des Monats als Tag des Zornes; akk. ibbû bzw. umum ebbûm), siehe H. IRSIGLER, *Zefanja* (HThKAT; Freiburg i. Br. 2002) 172.

<sup>(51)</sup> Übersetzung von R. BORGER, "Der Kyros-Zylinder", *TUAT* I/4, 408.

Die Theologumena vom "Tag JHWHs" und vom "Zorn JHWHs", die vorexilisch bei Zefanja zueinanderfanden, werden nachexilisch wieder voneinander getrennt. Diese Entwicklung setzt bereits im Büchlein Obadja aus früh-nachexilischer Zeit ein, in dem die Rede vom Tag JHWHs eine zentrale Rolle spielt. Gerade im Rückblick auf die Zerstörung Jerusalems (Obd 12-14) ist vom Zorn JHWHs keine Rede mehr, sondern vom "Tag des Unheils und der Bedrängnis". Auch gegen Edom und die feindlichen Völker ist der "Tag JHWHs" (Obd 15) nicht mit Gotteszorn gefüllt<sup>(52)</sup>. Noch deutlicher ist die Vermeidung der Rede vom "Zorn Gottes" in Joel (erste Hälfte des 4. Jhds?). Obwohl dort die Vorstellung vom großen und schrecklichen "Tag JHWHs" eine zentrale Rolle spielt (Joel 1,15; 2,1-2.11; 3,4), ist die Vorstellung vom Zorn Gottes konsequent aus den Vorlagen gestrichen (vgl. Jes 13,6; Zef 1,15-16; Mal 3,2.23)<sup>(53)</sup>.

Gerade in der Hoffnung auf JHWHs Wende nach vollzogenem Zorn gelangt die Schriftprophetie zu den tiefsten Einsichten in das Wesen des biblischen Gottes. Sie war es, die durch die Verarbeitung der Exilerfahrungen, nicht an ihr vorbei, zu Wegen fand, trotz aller materieller und spiritueller Not an JHWHs חסד, seiner Solidarität und Treue, vertrauend festzuhalten.

### 3. *Der Tempelstädte samt Heiligtümer zerstörende Zorn der Gottheit*

Hier spielen die mesopotamischen Stadtuntergangsklagen eine große Rolle, die gegen Ende des dritten Jahrtausends v. Chr. beim Untergang der 3. Dynastie von Ur (ca. 2112-2002) im südlichen Zweistromland entstanden. Zu dieser Gattung gehören fünf sumerische Kompositionen: die Stadtuntergangsklagen über Ur, Sumer und Ur, Nippur, Uruk und Eridu<sup>(54)</sup>.

Trotz unterschiedlicher Formgebung behandeln sie als Grundthema jeweils die Zerstörung der Städte, Tempel und die Nöte der

<sup>(52)</sup> In Klg 1,12; 2,1.21-22 ist der "Tag JHWHs" dagegen noch ganz der Tag seines Zornes!

<sup>(53)</sup> SPIEKERMANN, *Dies Irae*, 45-46.

<sup>(54)</sup> Dazu noch der "Fluch über Akkade", eine Komposition, in der einige Elemente der Stadtuntergangsklagen wesentlich verändert vorliegen; zu den Stadtuntergangsklagen aus biblischer Perspektive, siehe F.W. DOBBS-ALLSOPP, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion. A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (BibOr 44; Rom 1993); M. WISCHNOWSKY, *Tochter Zion. Aufnahme und Überwindung der Stadtklage in den Prophetenschriften des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 89; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2001).

Bevölkerung, wobei die Katastrophen auf die unergründlichen Entscheidungen der Götter, allen voran An und Enlil, zurückgeführt werden. Auch wenn das Motiv der Schuld nicht völlig fehlt, ist die Verwüstung doch niemals direkt mit der Schuld des Volkes begründet. Es ist der von den Göttern dekretierte Sturm, der alles schonungslos zerschlägt. So heißt es in der Klage über Ur:

Der große Sturmwind ruft vom Himmel - das Volk klagt,  
 der Sturmwind, der das Land vernichtet, brüllt auf Erden  
 - das Volk klagt,  
 der böse Wind ist wie eine starke Quelle nicht zu hemmen,  
 überfällt die Schiffe der Stadt, vernichtet sie insgesamt,  
 jagt im Fundament des Himmels einher - das Volk klagt,  
 läßt vor dem Sturmwind Feuer regnen - das Volk klagt,  
 mit dem wilden Sturm vereinigt er Feuer(regen),  
 wie eine Wolke, die reichen Regen hält, läßt er Feuer regnen<sup>(55)</sup>.

Hinter dieser Naturmetapher verbergen sich militärische Feinde, die Breschen in die schützende Stadtmauer schlagen, um dann mit dem Morden an der zivilen Bevölkerung zu beginnen. Stadttore und Marktplätze, früher Orte regen Lebens, sind voller Leichen: arm und reich, alt und jung, Wehrbereite und Flüchtende, sie alle hat das Schwert getroffen. Die Not erreicht ihren Höhepunkt mit der Zerstörung des Heiligtums und vergeblich versucht die Gottheit des entsprechenden Tempels, die großen Götter umzustimmen. So klagt die Göttin Ningal in der Klage über Ur:

‘Meine Stadt soll nicht vernichtet werden,  
 Ur soll nicht vernichtet werden,  
 seine Bewohner sollen nicht zugrunde gehen!’ sagte ich ihnen.  
 Aber An kehrte sich nicht an dieses Wort  
 (und) Mullil erfreute nicht mein Herz mit (der Antwort):  
 ‘So ist es gut, so sei es!’  
 Meine Stadt ganz zu vernichten, ordneten sie (vielmehr) an,  
 Ur ganz zu vernichten, ordneten sie an,  
 seine Einwohner zu töten, bestimmten sie...  
 Ans Wort wird nicht geändert,  
 Mullils Spruch nicht gestürzt<sup>(56)</sup>.

Erst nach der totalen Zerstörung durch den schrecklichen Sturm kommt es zum erlösenden “es ist genug” aus dem Mund der höchsten Götter. In keiner der sumerischen Stadtuntergangsklagen fehlt dieser

<sup>(55)</sup> A. FALKENSTEIN – W. VON SODEN, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gedichte* (Zürich 1953) 200.

<sup>(56)</sup> FALKENSTEIN – VON SODEN, *Hymnen und Gedichte*, 199.

positive Ausblick, was sich damit erklärt, dass sie für den Wiederaufbau zerstörter Stadt- und Tempelmauern komponiert waren und bei der baulichen Restauration rezitiert wurden.

Ohne auf die Problematik der traditionsgeschichtlichen Verbindungen zu den biblischen Klageliedern näher einzugehen<sup>(57)</sup>, ist die thematische Nähe frappant. Hier ist es die Schutzgottheit Jerusalems, JHWH selbst, die die Vernichtung von Stadt und Tempel in seinem Zorn vollzieht.

Ach, wie umwölkt in seinem Zorn der Herr die Tochter Zion.  
Er warf vom Himmel zu Boden die Zierde Israels  
und gedachte nicht seiner Füße Schemel  
am Tage seines Zornes (Klgl 2,1).

Wiederum ergeben sich wesentliche Unterschiede zur altorientalischen Umwelt.

Von einer Restauration von Stadt und Tempel oder von der Rückkehr der Gottheit fehlt in Klgl jede Spur. Es ist gerade die anhaltende Gottesferne, unter der der Einzelne (Klgl 3) und die Gemeinschaft (Klgl 5,22) leiden. Der positive Ausblick und das "es ist genug" der zürnenden Gottheit findet sich nicht in Klgl, sondern erst in Deuterijosaja (Jes 40,1-2)<sup>(58)</sup>.

Die Rolle der klagenden Gottheit in den sumerischen Stadtuntergangsklagen ist im Buch der Klagelieder auf Zion/ Jerusalem als Stadt und Frau übertragen (vgl. Klgl 1,18-22). Ihre Klage steigert sich zur Anklage JHWHs wegen seines brutalen und schonungslosen Vorgehens gegen ihre unschuldigen Kinder und den Rest der Bevölkerung (Klgl 2,20-22)<sup>(59)</sup>. Sie bittet nicht um Errettung, Vergebung oder Hilfe, sondern verlangt von JHWH, er solle die Folgen seines grauenvollen Tuns anschauen. Die Situation gleicht der einer Gegenüberstellung des Gewalttäters mit seinem Opfer, durch die dem Täter die Schwere seiner Tat bewusst werden soll: "Sieh und schau her, wem (למי) du solches angetan!" Das Verb עלל "handeln, antun" verweist auf die Opfer, nämlich die Kinder (עוללים). Der Mord an

<sup>(57)</sup> Die Diskussion zusammenfassend, BERGES, *Klagelieder*, 46-52.

<sup>(58)</sup> Zur Frage nach einer ursprünglichen Bücherfolge Protojesaja - Jeremia + Klgl + Deuterijosaja, siehe E. BOSSHARD-NEPUSTIL, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1-39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch*. Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit (OBO 154; Fribourg 1997) 450-464.

<sup>(59)</sup> Zur Übersetzung und Interpretation von Klgl 2, siehe BERGES, *Klagelieder*, 124-167.

wehrlosen schwangeren Frauen und Kindern macht die Bosheit jeden Krieges sichtbar (1 Sam 15,3; 22,19; 2 Kön 8,12; Jer 44,7). Dieser Wahrheit kann sich auch und gerade JHWH doch nicht verschließen!

Zion konfrontiert JHWH mit dem Kannibalismus der Mütter an ihren wohl bereits vor Hunger verstorbenen Kindern (Teknophagie), den er als Strafe für den Bundesbruch angedroht (Lev 26,29; Dtn 28,53-57) und Jerusalem in Aussicht gestellt hatte (Jer 19,9; Ez 5,10; vgl. 2 Kön 6,28)<sup>(60)</sup>. Wenn JHWH die Grausamkeit der Völker bei der Bestrafung Israels anklagte (vgl. Sach 1,15), gilt dies dann nicht umso mehr für ihn selbst und seinem Handeln gegen Jerusalem und Juda? An kaum einer anderen Stelle im AT ist das Schweigen JHWHs schmerzlicher als hier gegenüber der ihrer Kinder beraubten Frau und Mutter Zion<sup>(61)</sup>. Daraus folgt: am Schicksal unschuldiger Kinder zerbricht jeglicher Versuch, solche Art von Gewalt, und sei es die JHWHs, zu rechtfertigen!

#### 4. Der den Einzelnen in Todesnot stürzende Zorn der Gottheit

In der mesopotamischen Literatur finden sich eine Vielzahl von Hymnen und Gebeten in akkadischer Sprache, die zu einem großen Teil ins ausgehende zweite und beginnende erste Jahrtausend v. Chr. datiert werden. Viele davon wurden in den Bibliotheken der neu-assyrischen Könige in Assur und Ninive in mehrfachen Kopien gefunden, was darauf hinweist, dass es sich nicht um persönliche Gebete im eigentlichen Sinn, sondern um Gebetsformulare handelt<sup>(62)</sup>; die vielfach angefügten Ritualanweisungen verstärken diesen Eindruck<sup>(63)</sup>.

<sup>(60)</sup> A. BERLIN, *Lamentations* (OTL; Louisville 2002) 76: "God who slaughters his people is no less a cannibal than the mothers who eat their children"; zu den alttestamentlichen Texten zur (Anthropo- und) Teknophagie, jetzt ausführlich A. MICHEL, *Gott und Gewalt gegen Kinder im Alten Testament* (FAT 37; Tübingen 2003) 200-245.

<sup>(61)</sup> Siehe die Rezeption in Tob 13, Bar 4,5-5,9 und 4 Esr 9,26-10,59, vgl. U. BERGES, "Personifications and Prophetic Voices of Zion in Isaiah and Beyond", *The Elusive Prophet. The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (Hrsg. J.C. de MOOR) (OTS 45; Leiden 2001) 78-81.

<sup>(62)</sup> Vgl. Ps 6, der besonders formelhaft gestaltet ist und auf keine spezielle Notsituation abzielt, sondern als Gebetsformular für verschiedene Anlässe verwendbar war, so F.-L. HOSSFELDT – E. ZENGER, *Die Psalmen* (NEB; Würzburg 1993) I, 68; ähnlich E.S. GERSTENBERGER, *Psalms I. With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (FOTL XIV; Grand Rapids 1988; repr. 1991) 62.

<sup>(63)</sup> K. HECKER, "Hymnen und Gebete aus jüngerer Zeit", *TUAT II/5* (Gütersloh 1989) 753.

Eine wichtige Rolle spielen in diesem Kontext die sog. Herzberuhigungsklagen (Eršahunga-Gebete) und die Gebetsbeschwörungen, d.h. Handerhebungsgebete (šu.íl.lá) und Lösungsgebete (nam.búr.bi) zur Abwehr böser Vorzeichen<sup>(64)</sup>.

So heisst es in einer Herzberuhigungsklage vor dem Gott Anu:

Dein zorniges Herz möge an seinen Platz zurückkehren!  
 Dein wütendes Herz möge an seinen Platz zurückkehren!  
 Der Zorn deines verfinsterten Herzens  
 möge an seinen Platz zurück[kehren!] <sup>(65)</sup>.

Ein weiteres Beispiel sei aus dem Handerhebungsgebet an den Totengott Nergal angeführt:

Ich bin NN, Sohn des NN, dein Diener:  
 Zornige Abwendung des Gottes und der Göttin ist mir geworden,  
 Abgang und Verluste sind in meinem Hause entstanden.  
 Zu sprechen, ohne gehört zu werden, hat mich schlaflos gemacht.  
 Weil du, Nergal, mein Herr, (so) nachsichtig bist,  
 suche ich deine Gottheit,  
 weil du (so) vergebend bist, schaue ich nach dir,  
 weil du (so) freundlich blickst, sah ich dir ins Gesicht,  
 weil du (so) barmherzig bist, trat ich vor dich hin.  
 Sieh mich getreulich an und erhöere mein Gebet!  
 Dein erzürntes Herz komme zur Ruhe!  
 Löse meine Sünde, meine Verfehlung und mein Vergehen!  
 Der Knoten des Herzens deiner großen Gottheit  
 möge für mich gelockert werden!  
 Gott und Göttin, (die) erzürnt, abgewandt und grollend (sind),  
 mögen mit mir freundlich werden!  
 (Dann) will ich deine Großtaten verherrlichen, dein Lob preisen! <sup>(66)</sup>.

In einer anderen Gebetsbeschwörung wendet sich der Beter an den persönlichen Gott:

Mein Gott, werde freundlich, meine Göttin, verzeih!  
 Wendet euer Antlitz zu dem Flehen meiner Handerhebung!  
 Euer erzürntes Herz werde ruhig, euer Inneres erbarme sich,  
 gewährt mir Freundlichkeit!  
 Dann will ich euer unvergeßliches Loblied singen  
 für die weitverbreiteten Menschen! <sup>(67)</sup>.

<sup>(64)</sup> K. HECKER, "Gebetsbeschwörungen", *TUAT* II/5, 772; siehe W. MAYER, *Untersuchungen zur Formsprache der babylonischen Gebetsbeschwörungen* (StP.SM 5; Rom 1976); S. MAUL, *Herzberuhigungsklagen*. Die sumerisch-akkadischen Eršahunga-Gebete (Wiesbaden 1988).

<sup>(65)</sup> MAUL, *Herzberuhigungsklagen*, 78-79.

<sup>(66)</sup> HECKER, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 774.

<sup>(67)</sup> HECKER, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 777.

Die Analogien zu den Klage- und Bittgebeten des Einzelnen im Psalter liegen auf der Hand. Auch in ihnen wendet sich der Beter/Beterin an JHWH als den persönlichen Gott, um dessen Abwendung vom Zorn und seine erneute Zuwendung zu erreichen (Ps 6,2-3; vgl. 27,9).

Gegenüber den akkadischen Gebeten fällt auf, dass bei den sieben individuellen Bitt- und Klagepsalmen, die den zornigen Gott explizit anreden (Ps 6,2; 27,9; 30,6; 38,2; 77,10; 88,17; 102,11), nur in einem Fall JHWHs Zorn mit der Sünde des Beters begründet ist (Ps 38,4-5, vgl. V. 19)<sup>(68)</sup>.

In allen anderen Fällen sieht sich der Einzelne völlig hilflos und konsterniert dem Zorn JHWHs ausgesetzt, der ihn dadurch in Todesnöte und Todesnähe bringt (Ps 6,6; 27,3; 30,2.4.10; 77,3.17; 88,4-19; 102,6.12.21.24-25). Der dunkelste aller Psalmen, Ps 88, legt von dieser, aus dem Zorn JHWHs resultierenden Todesnähe, ein beredtes Zeugnis ab. Nicht etwa Sündenschuld oder kreatürliche Vergänglichkeit belasten den Beter, sondern die scheinbare Irrationalität Gottes, der den Beter von Jugend an mit seinen Zornesgluten quält und ihn völlig isoliert zurückläßt<sup>(69)</sup>.

An diesem Psalm wird besonders deutlich, in welchem Ausmaß der Zorn Gottes als lebensbedrohliche Macht erfahren und gefürchtet wurde. Nur wenn JHWH sich von seinem Zorn abwendet, ist Leben für den Beter möglich. Bleibt diese Wende aus, erwartet ihn der sichere Tod<sup>(70)</sup>.

Diese Vorstellung vom göttlichen Zorn als Macht zum Tod bzw. seine Zurückhaltung als Bewahrung vor dem Tod erklärt auch den engen Zusammenhang zwischen den Aussagen über den Zorn Gottes

<sup>(68)</sup> Die redaktionelle Ausgrenzung dieser Verse überzeugt nicht; gegen F. LINDSTRÖM, *Suffering and Sin. Interpretations of Illness in the Individual Complaint Psalms* (CB.OT 37) (Stockholm 1994) 240; ID., "Theodicy in the Psalms", *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (Hrsg. A. LAATO – J.C. DE MOOR) (Leiden 2003) 269.

<sup>(69)</sup> Vgl. U. BERGES, *Schweigen ist Silber — Klagen ist Gold. Das Drama der Gottesbeziehung aus alttestamentlicher Sicht mit einer Auslegung zu Ps 88* (Salzburger Exegetisch-Theologische Vorträge 1; Münster 2003) 42-113; vgl. B. JANOWSKI, *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott. Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2003) 231-250.

<sup>(70)</sup> Gleiches gilt für die Vorstellung von JHWH, der sein Angesicht vor dem Beter verhüllt; dazu H. SIMIAN-YOFRE, "פֶּיַח", *TWAT* VI, 646: "Das Antlitz verbergen ist die äußerste Reaktion JHWHs, der das Entflammen seines Zornes und das 'Verlassen' vorausgeht (Dtn 31,17-18; vgl. 32,20; Jer 33,5)".

und den sog. Vergänglichkeitsaussagen (Ps 89,47-48; vgl. Ps 78,38-39; 90,7-12; 103,8.14; Jes 57,16).

Gestützt wird dieser Nexus vom Zorn Gottes und dem Tod des Menschen durch die Stellen, in denen der Beter JHWH zum Zorn gegen seine Feinde aufruft, damit diese vernichtet werden und dem Reich des Todes verfallen. So sehnt sich der bedrängte Beter in Ps 69,25-29 danach, JHWH möge seinen Zorn auf seine Widersacher ausgießen, so dass ihr Lagerplatz veröde und sie aus dem Buch des Lebens getilgt würden<sup>(71)</sup> (vgl. Ps 21,10-11; 37,8-10; 58,10; 110,5). Andererseits kann der göttliche Zorn auch zur Errettung des Beters dienen (Ps 18,8-9.17).

Wie kaum sonst in der altorientalischen Umwelt sah sich der Beter in Israel dem göttlichen Zorn ungeschützt gegenüber; dies nicht zuletzt deshalb, weil es ihm verwehrt war, diesen Zorn — wie in der Umwelt möglich — durch magische Riten von sich abzuwenden<sup>(72)</sup>. Es blieb ihm nichts anderes übrig, als darauf zu hoffen, in der Zukunft JHWHs Zugewandtheit erneut erfahren zu dürfen. Gerade aus der Erfahrung des göttlichen Zornes nährt sich im Psalter die tiefe Sehnsucht nach dem verlässlich treuen Gott (vgl. Ps 85,4-8). Somit prägen JHWHs Zorn *und* seine Güte das biblische Gottesbild in hohem Maße. Diese Spannung liegt nicht zuletzt im monolatrischen bzw. monotheistischen Bekenntnis Israels zu JHWH in seiner polytheistischen Umwelt gegründet, da JHWH sowohl die Züge der nahen, lebensdienlichen als auch der fernen, lebensfeindlichen Gottheit in sich vereinigt. Diese religionsgeschichtliche Erkenntnis stellt aber erst die Voraussetzung, nicht jedoch schon die Lösung für die Frage nach der theologischen Bedeutung des göttlichen Zornes dar<sup>(73)</sup>. Die nachfolgenden Überlegungen wollen daher als Einladung

<sup>(71)</sup> Dazu A. GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69. Its structure, redaction and composition* (Altes Testament und Moderne 18; Münster 2003).

<sup>(72)</sup> Dazu H. STADHOUDERS, "Een assyrisch rituaal om van de toorn der Goden te verlossen, afkomstig uit het oude Sultantepe", *Kleine Encyclopedie van de Toorn*, 115-127; T. ABUSCH, "Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God", *Mesopotamian Magic and Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* (Hrsg. T. ABUSCH – K. VAN DER TOORN) (Ancient Magic and Divination 1; Groningen 1999) 83-121.

<sup>(73)</sup> Zu Recht betont H.-J. HERMISSON, *Alttestamentliche Theologie und Religionsgeschichte Israels* (ThLZ.F 3; Leipzig 2000) 67, dass der Alttestamentler nicht aus der Pflicht entlassen sei, "...nach der theologischen Relevanz seiner Ergebnisse zu fragen".



und Beitrag zu einem notwendigerweise fächerübergreifenden Gespräch dienen<sup>(74)</sup>.

### III. Schlussgedanken zu einer (bibel-)theologischen Herausforderung

Die Sichtung der Belege vom Zorn Gottes im AT, besonders von denen in der Prophetie und im Psalter, hat zum einen gezeigt, wie intensiv das antike Israel bei allen vier Formen des göttlichen Zorns am altorientalischen Erbe partizipierte und zum anderen, dass die alttestamentliche Vorstellung vom Zorn JHWHs sehr viel differenzierter gesehen werden muss als das bisher der Fall war. Dass der Zorn JHWHs sowohl in der Urgeschichte als auch in den Erzelternerzählungen keine Rolle spielt, ist nicht nur religionsgeschichtlich, sondern auch bibeltheologisch bedenkenswert. Das Auslassen des Zorns bei der sintflutlichen Menschheitsvernichtung in Gen 6–9 zeigt, dass JHWH zwar als gewaltbereiter, nicht aber als ein die Schöpfung aus Zorn vernichtender Gott angesehen wurde. Die Aspekte der Gewalt und des Zornes JHWHs gehen nicht immer Hand in Hand! Gleiches gilt für das Motiv der göttlichen Rache, das zwar immer mit dem der Gewalt, aber in viel geringerem Maße mit dem des Zornes verbunden ist. Die Motivkreise Zorn, Gewalt<sup>(75)</sup> und Rache<sup>(76)</sup>

<sup>(74)</sup> Siehe J. BARTON, "Alttestamentliche Theologie nach Albertz?", *Religionsgeschichte Israels oder Theologie des Alten Testaments?* (JBTh 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995) 29: "Die Theologie benötigt einen Raum, in dem sich Systematische Theologen und Bibelforscher über alttestamentliche Texte unterhalten können".

<sup>(75)</sup> N. LOHFINK (Hrsg.), *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit im Alten Testament* (QD 96; Freiburg i. Br. 1983); ID., "Der gewalttätige Gott des Alten Testaments und die Suche nach einer gewaltfreien Gesellschaft" (JBTh 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1987) 106-136; M. GIRARD, "La violence de Dieu dans la bible juive: approche symbolique et interprétation théologique", *ScEs* 39 (1987) 145-170; E. ZENGER, "Der Gott der Bibel - ein gewalttätiger Gott?", *KatBl* 119 (1994) 687-696; M. GÖRG, *Der un-heile Gott. Die Bibel im Bann der Gewalt* (Düsseldorf 1995); ID., "Der 'schlagende Gott' in der 'älteren' Bibel", *BiKi* 51 (1996) 94-100; MICHEL, *Gewalt*, 66-114 bietet dazu erstmalig eine Inventarisierung und auch Gruppierungskriterien.

<sup>(76)</sup> E. ZENGER, *Ein Gott der Rache? Feindpsalmen verstehen* (Freiburg i.Br. 1994) (engl. *A God of Vengeance. Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath* [Louisville 1996]); H.G.L. PEELS, *The Vengeance of God. The Meaning of the Root NQM and the Function of the NQM-Texts in the Context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament* (OTS 31; Leiden 1995).

JHWHs gehen zwar häufig ineinander über, sind aber keineswegs deckungsgleich. Die erforderlichen Differenzierungen sind für die theologische Reflexion über die "dunklen Seiten" Gottes stärker als bisher zu berücksichtigen<sup>(77)</sup>. Anders gesagt: was zum Aspekt der Gewalt oder Rache JHWHs richtig sein kann, muss für das Motiv vom göttlichen Zorn nicht ebenfalls zutreffen.

So sieht sich der Beter von Ps 88 zwar der Gewalt und dem Zorn JHWHs ausgesetzt, nicht aber seiner Rache oder Vergeltung. Dagegen protestieren die Beter von Ps 44 gegen die anhaltende Gewalt Gottes und bekräftigen sogar ihre Unschuld (V. 18-22), ohne vom Zorn Gottes zu reden. In Jes 64,4 beklagt sich die exilisch-nachexilische Gemeinde gegenüber dem zürnenden Gott, er habe sie geradezu zur Sünde getrieben: "Du hast gezürnt und wir haben gesündigt" (הָאֱלֹהִים קָצַף וַתִּחַטָּא). Die betende Gemeinde macht Gott für ihr Fehlverhalten verantwortlich, denn er trieb sie durch seinen anhaltenden Zorn zur Sünde<sup>(78)</sup>. Die Rede vom Zorn JHWHs läßt sich nicht einfach unter die Vorstellung des strafenden Gottes subsumieren<sup>(79)</sup>. Nur bei der Kategorie des *politischen* Zornes ist es berechtigt, den Zorn Gottes als Mittel zur Durchsetzung von Recht und Gerechtigkeit anzusehen und nur in diesem Sinn ist er als "Zorn über das Unrecht" richtig typisiert<sup>(80)</sup>. Es ist unsachgemäß, diese Art des göttlichen Zornes, die zwar das Gros der alttestamentlichen Belege ausmacht, zur einzigen Deutekategorie zu erheben<sup>(81)</sup>. Den Belegen vom Zorn JHWHs in den individuellen Klage- und Bittgebeten des Psalters, die bis auf Ps 38 keine menschliche Schuld anzeigen, wird man mit dem Theologumenon von der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit nicht gerecht! Auch legen diese Stellen keineswegs die Schlussfolgerung nahe, der Beter erfahre im Zorn JHWHs die Kehrseite seiner Liebe<sup>(82)</sup>. Ein solcher Ansatz

<sup>(77)</sup> Das gilt u.a. für DIETRICH – LINK, *Die dunklen Seiten Gottes*; W. BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology of the Old Testament*. Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy (Minneapolis 1997) 373-399: "Yahweh and Negativity".

<sup>(78)</sup> GROSS, *Zorn Gottes*, 68.

<sup>(79)</sup> Gegen PEELS, *Vengeance*, 292: "The vengeance of God is an extension of his holiness and zeal, it is paired with his wrath and it stands in service of his righteousness".

<sup>(80)</sup> Siehe R. ALBERTZ, *Zorn über das Unrecht*. Vom Glauben, der verändern will (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1996).

<sup>(81)</sup> Diesem Fehler unterliegen u.a. M. GIRARD, "La violence de Dieu dans la bible juive", 169; DIETRICH – LINK, *Die dunklen Seiten Gottes*, I, 152-153; bes. MIGGELBRINK, *Der zornige Gott*, 148.

<sup>(82)</sup> KLOPFENSTEIN, *Zorn Gottes*, 200; DIETRICH – LINK, *Die dunklen Seiten*, I, 152. 168-171.

läßt dem Beter letztlich sogar die Schuld an seinem Schicksal auf, da der Zorn JHWHs als Reaktion auf die abgelehnte Liebe Gottes missverstanden wird: "Er ist das Glaubenssymbol für das Tun der Liebe, die verwirft und der Selbstzerstörung überläßt, was sich ihr widersetzt" <sup>(83)</sup>.

Die Klagen des Beters in Ps 88, des Leidenden in Kgl 3 oder die Ijobs sprechen dagegen eine ganz andere Sprache, denn in ihnen ist von einem Widerstand gegen die aus freier Zuneigung angebotene Liebe Gottes keine Rede. Im Gegenteil: seine Liebe wurde ihnen ohne eigenes Verschulden und daher völlig unverständlich entzogen. Das Erklärungsmodell von menschlicher Schuld trifft beim Zorn JHWHs gegen den unschuldigen Einzelnen ins Leere! Weder das Schema "Schuld-Zorn-Strafe", noch der Hinweis auf die vielfältigen Anthropomorphismen in der biblischen Gottesrede bieten hier einen Ausweg <sup>(84)</sup>, zumal gar nicht erwiesen ist, "...daß Zorn Gottes im Sinn der altorientalischen und biblischen Sprecher eine Metapher gewesen sein sollte" <sup>(85)</sup>. Zudem gilt: wollte man die biblische Gottesrede von allen Anthropopathismen befreien, beträfe das neben der Rede vom Zorn Gottes auch die Vorstellung von seiner Liebe! Es kann daher nicht darum gehen, die Rede vom göttlichen Zorn als anthropomorph abzutun, sondern darum, ihr einen "sachgemäßen theologischen Ort" zuzuweisen <sup>(86)</sup>. Gleich anderer metaphorischer Rede von der Hand, dem Mund, Arm oder Herzen Gottes, macht auch die Rede vom Zorn Gottes keine Aussage über das Sein Gottes "an sich", sondern über das erfahrene Verhältnis Gottes zur Menschheit, zu Israel, zu den Völkern, zu einzelnen Gruppen und Individuen <sup>(87)</sup>. Wie die Rede von der Liebe, so zeigt auch die vom Zorn Gottes eine Beziehung an und es kommt dem alttestamentlichen Zeugnis das Verdienst zu, die Erfahrungen der Gottesferne nicht verschwiegen, sondern offen zur Sprache gebracht zu haben. Das biblische Israel entgeht damit — anders als eine

<sup>(83)</sup> P. TILICH, *Systematische Theologie* (Stuttgart <sup>2</sup>1956) I, 326; vgl. G. KRAUS, *Gott als Wirklichkeit*. Lehrbuch zur Gotteslehre (Frankfurt a.M. 1994) 169; Th. PRÖPPER, *Erlösungsglaube und Freiheitsgeschichte*. Eine Skizze zur Soteriologie (München <sup>2</sup>1988) 249.

<sup>(84)</sup> So richtig R. SCHWAGER, "Der Zorn Gottes. Zur Problematik der Allegorie", *ZKTh* 105 (1983) 413.

<sup>(85)</sup> GROSS, *Zorn*, 51; vgl. MICHEL, *Gewalt*, 344-346.

<sup>(86)</sup> HERMISSEN, *Alttestamentliche Theologie*, 96.

<sup>(87)</sup> HERMISSEN, *Alttestamentliche Theologie*, 95: "Das heißt, *sachgemäß* von dem Gott reden, der in Beziehung bleibt, der sich in seinem Handeln am Menschen definiert".

Vielzahl von Theologen und Exegeten<sup>(88)</sup> — dem Vorwurf, einseitig verkürzt nur die positiven Seiten der Gottesbeziehung zu präsentieren<sup>(89)</sup>. Dies muss der theologischen Reflexion eine Warnung sein, nicht überaffirmativ von der Liebe Gottes im Sinne eines “lieben Gottes” zu reden und so das biblische Gottesbild zu verharmlosen und auszuhöhlen<sup>(90)</sup>.

Gegen Markion, den Häretiker des 2. Jhds nach Chr., und gegen den vielerorten latent anwesenden Markionismus ist der “Gott des Zornes”, der unter anderen Vorzeichen auch im NT begegnet<sup>(91)</sup>, nicht gegen den “Gott der Liebe” auszuspielen. Nicht, dass Zorn und Liebe in JHWH gleichermaßen oder gar willkürlich zum Zuge kämen, was die sog. Gnadenformel ja kategorisch ausschließt<sup>(92)</sup>, aber auch nicht so, als ob der göttliche Zorn nur eine bittere Träne im Meer göttlicher Liebe sei.

Wenn es zutrifft, dass man vom Zorn Gottes nicht unter Absehung von seiner Gnade sprechen kann<sup>(93)</sup>, so gilt auch das Umgekehrte, dass man nicht von der Gnade Gottes reden sollte, ohne die Rede vom göttlichen Zorn mitzubedenken. Die Vorstellung vom Zorn Gottes, der den Einzelnen völlig überraschend und schuldlos trifft, gehört zu einer Erfahrungswirklichkeit, die auch Beterinnen und Betern in nachbiblischen Epochen keineswegs fremd ist<sup>(94)</sup>. In dramatischer Weise wird

<sup>(88)</sup> Vgl. BALOIAN, *Anger*, 177: “The experience of Yahweh’s anger was a blessing”.

<sup>(89)</sup> Mit BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology*, 379: “That is, Israel refuses to subject its life to any ideology, but resolves to tell the truth, even when that truth-telling is damaging to Yahweh’s reputation and character”.

<sup>(90)</sup> Zu den religionspädagogischen Folgen, siehe R. OBERTHÜR, *Angst vor Gott? Über die Vorstellung eines strafenden Gottes in der religiösen Entwicklung und Erziehung* (Essen 1986); vgl. I. SCHOBERTH, “Kein bloß ‘lieber Gott’. Die Verharmlosung der Gottesrede als Problem der Praktischen Theologie”, *ZNT* 9 (2002) 60-66.

<sup>(91)</sup> M. THEOBALD, “Zorn Gottes. Ein nicht zu vernachlässigender Aspekt der Theologie des Römerbriefs”, *Studien zum Römerbrief* (WUNT 136; Tübingen 2001) 68-100; V.A. LEHNERT, “Wenn der liebe Gott “böse” wird - Überlegungen zum Zorn Gottes im Neuen Testament”, *ZNT* 9 (2002) 15-25.

<sup>(92)</sup> SCORALICK, *Güte*, 129 zu Ex 34,6-7: “Die Gottesprädikationen versuchen einen Mittelweg zwischen den Extrempositionen zu steuern. JHWH ist in seinem Verhalten nicht berechenbar, aber er ist verlässlich treu auch über Brüche hinweg”.

<sup>(93)</sup> H. SPIEKERMANN, “Gnade. Biblische Perspektiven”, ID., *Gottes Liebe zu Israel*, 26.

<sup>(94)</sup> Siehe M. SCHNEIDER, “Der dunke Gott in der Mystik”, *Gott – ratlos vor dem Bösen?*, 173-216.

dies u.a. von jüdischen Dichtern nach der Erfahrung der Shoa in Worte zu fassen versucht. So heißt es im Gedicht "Zorn Gottes" von Margarete Susman:

Ist *das* Dein Zürnen? Herr, dies Grauen tritt  
 Aus deiner Ordnung...  
 Die Schöpfung ist verletzt durch Dein Geschöpf.  
 Darf dies geschehen?  
 Die Höhle ist so tief,  
 Aus der wir schreien, Herr - vergib den Schrei! <sup>(95)</sup>.

Auch hier gilt, dass der Einzelne in seiner persönlichen Anrede des zürnenden Gottes viel weiter geht als das der systematisch-theologischen Reflexion möglich wäre. Gleiches gilt für die Belege im AT, wo der einzelne Beter in der Klage *vor* JHWH zu viel radikaleren Aussagen gelangte als dies bei der Rede *über* den Zorn Gottes der Fall war <sup>(96)</sup>. Gerade dort, wo sich der Einzelne dem Zorn Gottes schutz- und grundlos ausgeliefert sieht (vgl. Ps 77,10-11; 88,8.17; 102,11), gerät seine Gottesbeziehung in die Krise, die darin besteht, trotz und inmitten der schmerzhaft erfahrenen Negativität an JHWH festzuhalten (vgl. Klgl 3,31-33). Biblische Rede *zu* JHWH entläßt Gott weit weniger schnell als die Rede *über* JHWH aus seiner Verantwortung für das, was der Fall ist, was der Beter als seine Wirklichkeit erfährt <sup>(97)</sup>. Ein Denkmodell, das dem alttestamentlichen Befund vom göttlichem Zorn und göttlicher Liebe am ehesten angemessen erscheint, ist m.E. das der *coincidentia oppositorum* von Nikolaus von Kues (gest. 1464) und zwar dergestalt, dass "... 'Jenseits' des Zusammenfalls der Gegensätze, nicht in ihm... der 'Ort' Gottes, der absoluten Notwendigkeit" zu suchen ist <sup>(98)</sup>.

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Das Thema des göttlichen Zornes steht anders als gemeinhin angenommen nicht an der Peripherie der alttestamentlichen Rede von und zu Gott, sondern in deren Zentrum, was nicht zuletzt die Selbstoffenbarung JHWHs an Mose in Ex 34,6-7 beweist, in der er

<sup>(95)</sup> M. SUSMAN, *Aus sich wandelnder Zeit*. Gedichte (Zürich 1953) 129.

<sup>(96)</sup> GROSS, *Zorn Gottes*, 67.

<sup>(97)</sup> Vgl. J. WERBICK, "Theo-Logie als Biographie", *Gott – ratlos vor dem Bösen?*, 171-172.

<sup>(98)</sup> H. VORGRIMMLER, *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch* (Freiburg i.Br. 2000) 119.

sich nicht als ein langmütiger, sondern als ein Gott "slow to anger" vorstellt.

Die Belege vom Zorn der Götter im altorientalischen Raum, die Vergleichspunkte mit den Stellen vom Zorn JHWHs im AT aufweisen, lassen sich vier Kategorien zuordnen: a) der die Menschheit zu vernichten suchende Zorn; b) der in die Geschicke der Völker eingreifende Zorn; c) der Tempelstädte samt Heiligtümer zerstörende Zorn; d) der den Einzelnen in Todesnot stürzende Zorn.

Anders als in den altorientalischen Mythen von der Vernichtung des Menschengeschlechts wird JHWH in Gen 6–9 nicht als ein aus Zorn seine Schöpfung vernichtender Gott dargestellt. Die Vorstellung vom Zorn JHWHs, der als "politisches" Instrument zur Durchsetzung der von ihm gewollten Ordnung beiträgt, prägt besonders die Belege in den Schriftpropheten, wobei sich nach der exilischen Katastrophe eine erneute Zuwendung JHWHs abzeichnet. Der göttliche Zorn gegen das Heiligtum prägt das Buch der Klagelieder, wobei die Stadt und Frau Zion die Rolle der klagenden Stadtgöttin übernimmt. In den individuellen Bitt- und Klagegebeten des Psalters kommt es zu den radikalsten Äußerungen der Beter angesichts völlig überraschender, weil unverschuldeter Erfahrungen des göttlichen Zornes. Das sehr vielschichtige Zeugnis vom Zorn JHWHs im AT erfordert eine nuanciertere theologische Reflexion als die bisherigen Versuche. Das Denkmodell der *coincidentia oppositorum* scheint in die richtige Richtung zu weisen.

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#### SUMMARY

The theme of divine anger is not peripheral to YHWH's revelation of himself but central to it (cf. *inter alia* Exod 34,6-7). When the instances of YHWH's anger in the OT, particularly in the writing prophets and the Psalms are compared with instances of the anger of the gods in the ancient Near East, four categories can be distinguished: a) the anger that seeks to destroy mankind; b) the anger that intervenes in the destiny of peoples; c) the anger that destroys temple cities with their sanctuaries; d) the anger that plunges the individual into danger of death. The OT speaks of YHWH's anger on many different levels, which demands a portrayal that is much more nuanced than has been the case up to now and represents a continuing challenge, not least for the reflection of biblical theology.

## The Story of Jephthah and his Daughter: Then and Now

The story in Judges 11 of Jephthah's vow and its sequel has intrigued and troubled readers down the centuries. What exactly, readers have asked, does Jephthah promise to do, and is his vow a proper one? In the event, is his daughter put to death, or is she consigned to perpetual virginity? If she dies, is Jephthah at fault in sacrificing her? Among the Church Fathers, St Augustine in particular agonized over the narrative at some length<sup>(1)</sup>. Among later readers, Sir Thomas Browne in the seventeenth century also famously wrestled with it<sup>(2)</sup>. Today it continues to provoke discussion and analysis, not least on the part of feminist scholars<sup>(3)</sup>. I shall attempt to identify what the narrative wants to say about the vow and its implementation, bearing in mind the story's place within the Jephthah cycle and within the Book of Judges as a whole. I shall also ask what form a present-day re-reading or actualization of it might take.

### I. What Does the Narrative Want to Say?

Attempting to identify what the narrative wants to say about the vow and its implementation I shall follow Webb's division of the Jephthah cycle into five episodes<sup>(4)</sup>.

#### 1. *Judg 10,6-16: The Scene is Set*

The Israelites again did what was evil in the eyes of YHWH...they abandoned YHWH and did not worship him. So the anger of YHWH was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites ... (10,6-7).

One is here directed by the Deuteronomic author/editor (the phrase "did what was evil in the eyes of YHWH" reveals his hand)<sup>(5)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*, PL 34.809-822.

<sup>(2)</sup> See R. ROBBINS (ed.), *Sir Thomas Browne's Pseudodoxia Epidemica* [1646] (Oxford 1981) I, 404-406.

<sup>(3)</sup> See list in T.C. RÖMER, "Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell about the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?", *JSOT* 77 (1998) 27 n. 2.

<sup>(4)</sup> B.G. WEBB, *Judges. An Integrated Reading* (Sheffield 1987) 41-77.

<sup>(5)</sup> So 2,11; 3,7.12 [*bis*]; 4,1; 6,1; 13,1. Cf. Deut 4,25; 9,18; 17,2; 31,29. The phrase in 11,9 "gives them before me" [נתן לפני], where one might expect "gives

as to how to read the story of Jephthah. Like the rest of the Book of Judges it is about the deplorable state of affairs posited as existing before the beginning of the monarchy. As 2,7-23 has indicated, the obedience to the will of YHWH that characterized the lifetime of Joshua broke down afterwards. Israel was forever lapsing into rebellion, and YHWH was, under protest, intervening to rescue it by the hand of Judges. The tribes failed to pull together, and civil war ensued. Towards the end of the book, one is told why this was so: "There was no king in Israel in those days, and every man did what was right in his own eyes" (17,6; 21,25; cf. 18,1; 19,1). In the absence of a king, or an equivalent unifying figure such as Joshua, there was no chance of the Torah revealed to Moses being implemented, so pagan ways prevailed. Although the Book of Judges does not pass moral verdicts on the lives of the Judges, there can be little doubt that the Deuteronomist will have regarded some of them as morally flawed. The fact that YHWH is represented as being with, and as using, a Gideon or a Jephthah does not mean that one is supposed to take him for a saint.

## 2. *Judg 10,17–11,11: Jephthah – from Outcast to Leader and Head*

The reader is here introduced to Jephthah and told of his flight from the family home and his subsequent rise to a leadership role within Gilead. In 11,3, "There gathered around him some worthless ["empty"] men, and they went out with him", Jephthah is presented as an opportunist. In 11,6-9 Jephthah is represented as a tough schemer:

Then they said to Jephthah, 'Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon' ... Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, 'If you bring me home again to fight with the Ammonites, and YHWH gives them before me, I shall indeed be your head'.

The elders ask him to be their קִצִּין, their leader in the campaign, but he holds out for a more permanent and a broader position, that of being their שֹׂרֵר, head (this in fact is what the elders originally had in mind: 10,17), and he prevails. They agree that provided Jephthah succeeds as קִצִּין in defeating Ammon he will be their permanent שֹׂרֵר. With Gideon's words ringing in one's ears, "I shall not rule over you, and my son shall not rule over you; YHWH shall rule over you"

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into my hand", also probably betrays Deuteronomic redaction (cf. Deut 1,8,21; 2,31.33.36; 7,2.23; 23,15; 31,5; Josh 10,12; 11,6; 1 Kgs 8,46. The only non-Deuteronomic occurrence seems to be at Isa 41,2).



(8,23), one asks oneself whether headship of the people is Jephthah's to demand or the elders' to confer. One is reminded of Isa 3, where people defy the divine sovereign, YHWH of hosts, by appointing one of their kindred as their קִצִּי (vv. 6-7).

### 3. *Judg 11,12-28: Jephthah Challenges the Ammonites*

Jephthah steps forward on behalf of Israel as a whole. In reliance on the might of YHWH the Judge, he challenges the Ammonites in uncompromising tones. On the face of it, leadership has brought the best out of Jephthah; he seems no longer to be a schemer and opportunist. The next episode, however, will show otherwise.

### 4. *Judg 11,29-38: Jephthah's Vow and its Fulfilment*

The vow story is very reminiscent of some non-Israelite ones. It has a clear parallel in versions of the tale of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigeneia in which when his ships face contrary winds or are becalmed he makes a vow which leads to the sacrifice, or narrowly averted sacrifice, of his daughter. Closer still than the Iphigeneia story, because it involves the idea of returning from a journey, whereas the Iphigeneia story is set on the Greeks' outward journey, is the tale of the offer to Poseidon by Idomeneus, king of Crete, of the first human being to meet him, which turns out to be his son. When he attempts to fulfil his vow, the people of Crete drive him into exile<sup>(6)</sup>. There is a comparable story too about Alexander the Great: an oracle told him to sacrifice the first living thing which he encountered on leaving the city; the first person he met was an ass-driver, but the latter had the presence of mind to save his life by pointing out that the animal had met Alexander first<sup>(7)</sup>. Pausanias also tells of a ruler of Haliartus in Boeotia who slaughtered his son because the priestess of Delphi, when asked how to find water in an arid place, had bidden him kill the first man that he should meet on his return to Haliartus (from his son Lophis sprang up the river Lophis)<sup>(8)</sup>. In the *De Fluviiis* of the Pseudo Plutarch, one finds a story that Maeander sacrificed his son Archelaus, his mother and his sister, they being the first persons to meet him on his return from war after he had vowed to sacrifice the first that came

<sup>(6)</sup> This tradition, however, is not found before c. 400 CE, in Servius, a commentator on the *Aeneid*.

<sup>(7)</sup> Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, VII, 3, ext. 1.

<sup>(8)</sup> Pausanias, *Hellados Periegesis*, IX,33,4.

to congratulate him after a success; grief-stricken he then hurled himself into a river, which was consequently named after him<sup>(9)</sup>. Stories that remind us of Judg 11 are thus not uncommon outside Israel. Our story may be called a “type-scene”, a genre first identified in Homer by Walter Arend<sup>(10)</sup>. Robert Alter, among others, has written illuminatingly on the prevalence of this literary genre in the Old Testament<sup>(11)</sup>. To what extent, if at all, conscious borrowing was involved, is unclear. A more fruitful question, I suggest, is: What was the appeal of the rash-vow motif that led to its frequent occurrence over national and cultural boundaries? To this point I shall return later.

#### a) 11,29-33: The Swearing of the Vow.

On his return from Mizpah in order to do battle with the Ammonites, the spirit of YHWH comes upon Jephthah and he swears an oath:

וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא, הוֹצֵא אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא, whatever/whoever emerges and comes out<sup>(12)</sup> of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, וְהָיָה לִיהוָה, shall surely be YHWH's, וְהָעֵלִיתִּהוּ עֹלָה, and I shall sacrifice him/her/it as a holocaust (?) (11,31).

A vow has functioned as an important element in an earlier episode (11,10, the elders' vow to Jephthah). The text, as Augustine notes, neither praises nor condemns this oath, leaving us to exercise our intellect on the matter<sup>(13)</sup>. This “authorial restraint” is indeed, as Webb notes, characteristic of Judges as a whole:

Meaning is conveyed throughout by implicit, indirect means: through narrated events, through irony, and above all through dialogue<sup>(14)</sup>.

The sense of 11,31 is unclear. There are at least four ways of taking it.

(i) The commonest is to suppose that a literal sacrifice of an animal or human being is meant throughout. It must be allowed,

<sup>(9)</sup> W.W. GOODWIN (ed.), *Plutarch's Morals* (Boston 1871) V, 477-509, 488-489: “On the Names of Rivers and Mountains and of Such Things as Are to be Found Therein”.

<sup>(10)</sup> W. AREND, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin 1933).

<sup>(11)</sup> R. ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York 1981) 47-62.

<sup>(12)</sup> הוֹצֵא אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא is tautologous; it is possible that one of the two expressions is a gloss (cf. the Versions). It is surprising that the pronoun הוּא is not used.

<sup>(13)</sup> PL 34,812.

<sup>(14)</sup> WEBB, *Judges*, 77. Cf. R. ALTER, *The World of Biblical Literature* (London 1992) 64-65.

however, that *היה ליהוה* is an unusual way to refer to a sacrifice. The phrase is used of Levites being consecrated to the divine service (cf. Num 3,12) and of Israel belonging to YHWH (as in Jer 24,7; Mal 3,17). Also, one would expect to find *לעולה*, although the *ל* is admittedly missing from 2 Kgs 3,27, where Mesha offers up his firstborn as a holocaust.

(ii) It is possible to take the vow as a promise to dedicate someone to virginity under the image of a holocaust. In that case the language of holocaust-offering is being meant metaphorically and *היה ליהוה* directs one to read it in terms of dedication to God. So D.Marcus and P.T.Reis<sup>(15)</sup>. According to Pamela Reis, what Jephthah intends is to dedicate to YHWH one of his slaves but (in accordance with the laws found in Lev 27) thereafter to redeem him for a sizeable sum of money, which would be shared among the priests. Jephthah is thereby seeking to bribe the people by his financial generosity. The redeemed slave would, in accordance with the aforesaid laws, remain “holy” and would never work again. Jephthah’s daughter is a “spoiled brat”<sup>(16)</sup>, as pampered by Jephthah as Adonijah was by David, who never asked the latter why he had done anything (1 Kgs 1,6). In his other three speeches Jephthah challenges his interlocutors to provide him with a “Why?” (11,7.26; 12,3), but in addressing his daughter (11,35) he does not do so. Knowing of her father’s vow, the daughter runs out of the house to greet him, perhaps thinking that he will break his vow for her sake, but perhaps also choosing the consequences of his not doing so, namely that she would, after redemption, remain “holy” by not doing women’s work, the birth and rearing of issue. “She would rather continue to be the one and only love of an extremely indulgent father than become some man’s first wife”<sup>(17)</sup>. Ingenious as this reading it, it fails to convince. Since when has a good knowledge of history or the frequent use of religious language been a sufficient proof of virtue? If redemption of a slave is meant, the terms of the vow are expressed with intolerable obliqueness. Moreover, that a redeemed woman would have to remain a virgin has to be argued by analogy with what Talmudic tradition, rather than the biblical text, prescribes for a redeemed animal.

<sup>(15)</sup> D. MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow* (Lubbock 1986) 25-26. P.T. REIS, *Reading the Lines. A Fresh Look at the Hebrew Bible* (Peabody 2002) 105-130: “Spoilt Child: A Fresh Look at Jephthah’s Daughter”.

<sup>(16)</sup> REIS, *Reading the Lines*, 120.

<sup>(17)</sup> REIS, *Reading the Lines*, 126.

Further, how credible is the proposal of Marcus and Reis to take *עולה* in 11,31 metaphorically? The nearest approach that Marcus can cite for a spiritual *עולה* is to be found in Num 8,11.13. 21, where the Levites are presented to God as a “special gift” (REB), a spiritual *תרומה*. This, I think, is not very strong evidence for finding in Judg 11 the idea of a spiritual *עולה*. What of Gen 22,1-14? It may well be the case, as is forcefully argued by Moberly, that this story, in which Abraham is commanded to offer his son but, the order having been countermanded, sacrifices a ram instead, has a metaphorical value<sup>(18)</sup>, but I doubt that it can be used to argue for finding in Judg 11 the idea of consecrated virginity, which is remote from what happens in Gen 22.

Consecration to God, such as occurred with Samuel (1 Sam 1) and Samson (Judg 13,5.7; 16,17), is without parallel in the case of a girl (although the priestly law of the Nazirites in Num 6 does say [v. 2] that both men and women can make this vow). Both Samson and Samuel, of course, were married. Attempts to find such consecrated virgins in Exod 38,8 and 1 Sam 2,22 carry little conviction. Exod 38,8 speaks of the laver being made “from mirrors (?) of serving (?) women who served (?) at the entrance of the tent of meeting”. 1 Sam 2,22 has Eli hearing that his sons “had lain with women who served (?) at the entrance of the tent of meeting”. Even if these texts speak of women with some sort of cultic role (this is the probable meaning of the root *צבא* that is used here), there is nothing to say that they were unmarried<sup>(19)</sup>. KeddeLL thinks that the thirty-two Midianite virgins who are assigned to YHWH in Num 31,40 are to be thought of as consecrated to Temple-service, but this is very speculative<sup>(20)</sup>. So too with Wood’s suggestion that in Judg 21,19-21 the “daughters of Shiloh” captured as wives for the Benjamites had been tabernacle-

<sup>(18)</sup> R.W.L. MOBERLY, *The Bible, Theology and Faith*. A Study of Abraham and Jesus (Cambridge 2000) 127-131.

<sup>(19)</sup> In Exod, LXX speaks of women *fasting*, Pesh and Ibn Ezra of their *praying*, Vg of their *lying in watch*, Rashi and Nachmanides of their *crowding in*. In 1 Sam, Vg has them *waiting*. LXX (“what his sons had done to the children of Israel”) and Pesh (“how they reviled the women who prayed”) seem to presuppose different readings from MT.

<sup>(20)</sup> J.S. KEDDELL, *A Dissertation on the Vow of Jephthah* (London 1840) 19-21. It is hard to reconcile such a future with 31,16: the Midianite womenfolk were chiefly responsible for the Beor episode. (On the other hand, since these thirty-two are not killed and are not married off to Levites, it is unclear what fate is prescribed for them).

servants at Shiloh<sup>(21)</sup>. That Judg 11 thinks in terms of consecrated virginity is therefore improbable<sup>(22)</sup>.

(iii) Some have taken the two clauses to indicate alternative outcomes, arguing that the ׀ here has the force of *or*. So, for example, Junius<sup>(23)</sup> and Sir Thomas Browne<sup>(24)</sup>. Browne quotes as a parallel Exod 21,15 (“Whoever strikes his father ׀ [=or, not *and*] his mother shall die”). If a clean animal should appear, Jephthah would sacrifice it; if a human being, he would consecrate it to God. The latter, Browne argues, is what happened to Jephthah’s daughter (see below on v. 39). This interpretation, which still has its advocates today, is ingenious, but contrived. Apart from the unlikelihood of the existence in Israel of consecrated virgins, one may note that the vow, on this reading of it, makes provision for either a human being or a clean animal coming forth first, but not for it being an unclean animal that presents itself.

(iv) KeddeLL suggests that the first clause refers to dedication, the second to animal sacrifice. Jephthah vows that the animal/person first to meet him will be dedicated to YHWH and/or [depending on whether the ׀ is conjunctive or disjunctive in force] “I shall offer up to him [YHWH] a burnt-offering”. KeddeLL notes the omission of the ל which one would expect if Jephthah were offering a human being as a sacrifice. He finds evidence for personal suffixes (as here with וְהַעֲלִיחָהּ) denoting the indirect object in Gen 37,4; 2 Sam 20,5; 2 Sam 15,4 and 1 Kgs 20,9<sup>(25)</sup>. Even if one should grant this to be a possible usage<sup>(26)</sup>, this interpretation has no support in the Versions.

<sup>(21)</sup> L. WOOD, *Distressing Days of the Judges* (Grand Rapids 1975) 295.

<sup>(22)</sup> Kimchi envisaged Jephthah’s daughter as surviving in a state of enforced virginity but he did not think in terms of a cultic consecration, only of seclusion: “He built her a house and placed her there. She became a recluse (*perūshāh*) from mankind and from the ways of the world” (cited from MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow*, 8-9; other adherents of this view are there listed). This type of permanent seclusion would also be without parallel.

<sup>(23)</sup> *Testamenti Veteris Biblia Sacra...scholiis illustrati ab I. Tremellio & F. Junii*. Hanoviae, typis Wecheliani, 1603. Junius says that the conjunction here has a disjunctive force, as at Gen 26,11, Exod 1,10; 21,15 and often elsewhere.

<sup>(24)</sup> BROWNE, *Pseudodoxia*, 369.

<sup>(25)</sup> KEDDELL, *Dissertation*, 33-36.

<sup>(26)</sup> 2 Sam 15,4 is unpersuasive, since the verb used there regularly takes a direct object (e.g. at Ps 82,3). In the Genesis text, if the reading and the MT pointing are correct, the suffix does denote an indirect object (cf GKC 115c, which speaks of it as a “strange case”). The other two texts perhaps also attest such a usage.

Furthermore, the occurrence of the phrase ויעלהו עולה, without ל, in 2 Kgs 3,27 of human sacrifice ("he [Mesha] offered him [his son] as a burnt offering") makes it likely that the suffix has the same force here.

Marcus says that he personally favours a non-sacrificial interpretation<sup>(27)</sup>, but he then goes on to say that the ambiguities in the text are so striking that it is quite possible that they were "consciously devised by the narrator. He chose his words so that they would be open to a number of interpretations"<sup>(28)</sup>. He notes that there may have been variant traditions about the fate of Idomeneus and Iphigeneia. True enough, but one surely does not find two alternative accounts within a single telling of the story. Intentional ambiguity is certainly not absent from some Old Testament narratives, but leaving it unclear how badly David, say, or Bathsheba, or Tamar behaved is not comparable with deliberately leaving the reader uncertain whether Jephthah's daughter ended up on a pyre or in consecrated virginity.

It seems to me that views (ii)-(iv) labour under more difficulties than (i). Although, therefore, ודיה ליהוה is odd, I shall proceed on the assumption that the vow does not involve consecration to virginity. Jephthah vows to offer in sacrifice whatsoever first meets him. It is likely that he has a human being in mind: הוצא is used of human beings at Num 22,11, and never of animals; אשר צא of human beings at Gen 15,4, and never of animals. The phrase "Going out to meet" is used only of people (e.g. 1 Sam 18,6), not of animals<sup>(29)</sup>.

A word should be said at this point about human sacrifice in Israel. Although it came to be regarded with abhorrence (laws strictly forbidding child-sacrifice are found at Lev 18,21; 20,2; Deut 12,31; 18,10), it is by no means clear that this was so from the start. J.D. Levenson has advanced a strong case for thinking otherwise<sup>(30)</sup>. Exod 22,29 commands the offering to YHWH of the first-born son without the rider added in 34,20 that instead of being sacrificed he should be redeemed. Ezek 20,25-26, on a straightforward reading of it (I agree with Levenson that this is the way the text should be taken), says that

<sup>(27)</sup> MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow*, 50.

<sup>(28)</sup> MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow*, 52.

<sup>(29)</sup> The verb to meet, קרא, is however used on its own of an animal at Judg 14,5.

<sup>(30)</sup> J.D. LEVENSON, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*. The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity (New Haven – London 1993) 3-17.

YHWH imposed a morally reprehensible duty to sacrifice the first-born. Gen 22 has YHWH initially command the slaying of Isaac. Mic 6,7 can only be taken to say that child-sacrifice is wrong *per se* if (improbably, most think) it is taken also totally to reject animal sacrifice. Mesha's offering of his son and heir in 2 Kgs 3,27 is represented as effective: it causes the withdrawal of the Israelite forces from Moab. It is quite possible, therefore, that the story of Jephthah's daughter was originally understood on the lines that Levenson interprets it: it may have been rash of Jephthah to make such an open vow, but his execution of it was no less than his bounden duty, since as his only child his daughter belonged to YHWH. (The fact, it may be noted, that in 11,36 the daughter does not protest suggests that the story ultimately derives from circles in which such practices of child sacrifice were accepted.) YHWH by not intervening (perhaps indeed by arranging for the daughter to be the first on the scene) was in effect, Levenson says, "exercising his claim upon the first-born" <sup>(31)</sup>. This, I say, may quite possibly be how the story was originally understood in the oral tradition, but in the context of the Book of Judges as it has come down to us, I cannot take the sacrifice as something morally acceptable, in view of the unfavourable view of Jephthah which (as I see it) the book portrays. Boling describes Jephthah as an "exemplary Yahwist judge" <sup>(32)</sup>; this is not my reading of him. Furthermore, in 10,6 and 11,9 evidence has already been noted of Deuteronomic editing of the Jephthah cycle, and from a Deuteronomic perspective the immorality of human sacrifice is incontrovertible (cf. Deut 12,31; 18,10).

What of the propriety of the vow in the text as it has come down to us? The ancient Jewish and Christian commentators took the view that this was an improper oath. What if an unclean animal had presented itself <sup>(33)</sup>? Josephus says that Jephthah's vow to sacrifice the first living creature he met was "neither lawful nor pleasing to God" (*Ant.* 5 § 266). It was a rash oath, say the *Apostolic Constitutions* (7,37). One is inclined to agree. If, however, as argued above, a human being is specifically intended, in violation of the prohibition on human sacrifice, the vow is more than rash; it is morally repugnant.

As noted earlier, the Book of Judges invites one to read its

<sup>(31)</sup> LEVENSON, *Death and Resurrection*, 16.

<sup>(32)</sup> R.G. BOLING, *Judges* (AB 6A; New York 1975) 210 (cf. 205).

<sup>(33)</sup> So, for example GenR 60,3, LevR 37,4, and Ps Philo, LAB 39.

contents from a Deuteronomic perspective. The Deuteronomic view about vows is that, once made, they have to be carried out; but that there is no need to make them in the first place (Deut 23,21-23). Jephthah's vow is surely to be taken as one that he should not have made. Once he had made it, and his daughter had presented herself, was he obliged to sacrifice her, since vows must be fulfilled (Deut 23,21)? Or did the prohibition on human sacrifice (Deut 12,31; 18,10) override this? It is hard to know what the narrator thinks about this. Since, however, what is vowed is vowed to YHWH, and since human sacrifice is from a Deuteronomic point of view repugnant to him, it seems likely that he thought that YHWH would rather have the vow broken than that the child should die. It should be noted that Jephthah's is not the only rash oath in Judges. To vow to give his daughter to whosoever should capture Debir (1,12) is foolish of Caleb; what if the captor should turn out to be a foreigner, illegitimate, or a slave? Micah's mother invokes a hasty curse on the silver that she has lost, unaware that the thief is her own son. In 21,1, the Israelites swear not to give their daughters in marriage to Benjamites (and have to resort to casuistry in order to prevent that tribe from dying out). Judges thus seems to share Deuteronomy's hostility to rash vows.

After 11,29, where the spirit of YHWH comes upon Jephthah, one perhaps expects him immediately to go out and vanquish his foes (like Othniel, Judg 3,10, Samson, Judg 14,19, and Saul, 1 Sam 11,6). Instead he makes a vow. The idea will probably be that Jephthah wants to make doubly sure of victory (and thereby secure his coveted position as רִאשׁוֹ). He has insufficient trust in God's spirit<sup>(34)</sup>.

Jephthah desires to bind God rather than embrace the gift of the spirit. What comes to him freely, he seeks to earn and manipulate. The meaning of his words is doubt, not faith; it is control, not courage<sup>(35)</sup>.

#### b) 11,34-38: The Vow Fulfilled.

Jephthah returns from the battlefield and "when Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter<sup>(36)</sup>. בִּמְנוֹ besides her (?), he

<sup>(34)</sup> So, for example, P. TRIBLE, *Texts of Terror* (Philadelphia 1984) 93-116, "The Daughter of Jephthah: An Inhuman Sacrifice", 96.

<sup>(35)</sup> TRIBLE, *Texts of Terror*, 97.

<sup>(36)</sup> Like the Levite's concubine (Judg 19) and the woman with the millstone (Judg 9,53), she is not named. In Ps Philo, LAB 39-40, the girl's name is given as *Seila*. (She has also sometimes been known as *Iphis* [=Iphigeneia].)



had neither son nor daughter” (11,34)<sup>(37)</sup>. The point is to highlight the fact that the death of his daughter would cut off Jephthah’s line.

11,35-38 presents a dialogue between Jephthah and his daughter. As Webb notes, each of the five episodes in the Jephthah story carries a dialogue, and “it is in the dialogue that the real dramatic interest of each episode is centred”<sup>(38)</sup>. The first speaker here is the father:

He tore his clothes, and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! <You have become a stumbling block to me [Vg]> It is you who are the cause of my calamity!” (11,35).

One gets a strong impression that Jephthah has not reckoned with the possibility that it would be his daughter that would meet him. Augustine suggests that he was rather anticipating taking the knife to his wife; the appearance of the daughter will, Augustine thinks, be God’s punishment for his wicked plans<sup>(39)</sup>. That would, however, be very hard on the girl, and would make the story even more indigestible than it otherwise is. Perhaps he is to be thought of as expecting one of his domestics to be the hapless victim. What is clear is that Jephthah, like Agamemnon, wastes little sympathy on his daughter, indeed he as good as blames her for his troubles; his thoughts are all centred on himself. One may suppose that he feels sorry for himself not just because he is to lose his daughter but because, since she is his only child, his line is to be abruptly cut short<sup>(40)</sup>. One is left in no doubt that he has brought this on himself, for he “has debased religion (a vow, an offering) into politics”<sup>(41)</sup>. Just as the elders of Gilead had earlier offered Jephthah an inducement—that he should be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead (11,8) — in order to get him to fight for them, so now Jephthah has

<sup>(37)</sup> מִמֶּנּוּ is strictly speaking masculine, meaning “from him”. Hence Kimchi inferred that Jephthah was married to a widow with children that he had adopted; this daughter was the only child that was Jephthah’s own. (See A. COHEN – A.J. ROSENBERG (eds), *Joshua, Judges* [SBBS; London – Jerusalem – New York 1987] 44). More probably the masculine stands here, as not uncommonly (GKC 135 O), in place of the feminine.

<sup>(38)</sup> WEBB, *Judges*, 73.

<sup>(39)</sup> PL 34.812.

<sup>(40)</sup> If an intertextual allusion to Gen 22 is to be detected, one may note that God’s vow to Abraham issues in countless descendants, while that of Jephthah to YHWH leaves Jephthah childless. See E. LEACH, *Genesis as Myth and Other Essays* (London 1969) 37-38 (“the two stories appear as mirror images of each other”); MARCUS, *Jephthah’s Vow*, 38-40.

<sup>(41)</sup> WEBB, *Judges*, 74.

tried to bribe God himself<sup>(42)</sup>. He had looked forward to coming home from the Ammonite campaign *in peace* (v. 31), but peace has fled from him. One is reminded of the Gideon story. When told that he is to defeat Midian, Gideon asks for a sign and YHWH agrees (6,13-18). Then the spirit comes upon him, and he again wants a sign (6,36-40). "Gideon sounds like a child, and the deity responds with parental patience"<sup>(43)</sup>. The giving of a sign is a regular part of a call narrative (cf. 1 Sam 10; Jer 1); only Gideon and Moses (Exod 3) ask for the sign, showing lack of confidence in themselves and/or YHWH. Their behaviour, however, is venial; that of Jephthah is not.

Jephthah has no choice, he claims: "I have given my word to YHWH, and I cannot go back on it". He *could* have got the vow annulled, said some of the Jewish commentators (either Jephthah should have gone to Phineas the high priest for this purpose, or Phineas himself should have taken the initiative)<sup>(44)</sup>. I suspect, as I have made clear, that they are right: one is expected to believe that, having made such a vow, Jephthah should have broken it (if he could not get it annulled or commuted) rather than slaughter his daughter<sup>(45)</sup>. (In 1 Sam 14, when Jonathan has incurred the penalty of death by breaking his fast, he is spared death and the people redeem him [v. 35]).

The daughter now gives her response. She accepts the inevitability of her fate (11,36), but asks a favour: "... that I may go down<sup>(46)</sup> on the mountains..." (11,37). Marcus thinks that if she were facing death, Jephthah's daughter would wish to spend her last days with her father rather than with her female friends<sup>(47)</sup>. That, I suspect, would depend on her view of her father: the fact that she says that her

<sup>(42)</sup> WEBB, *Judges*, 64.

<sup>(43)</sup> M. O'CONNOR, "Judges", *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (ed. R.E. BROWN et al.) (London 1990) 139.

<sup>(44)</sup> GenR 60,3, LevR 37,4, QohR 10,15. Also Kimchi (see COHEN – ROSENBERG, *Joshua, Judges*, 258).

<sup>(45)</sup> As Cicero (*De Officiis* II.25.371) says of Agamemnon: "He ought to have broken his vow rather than commit so horrible a crime" (promissum potius non faciendum, quam tam taetrum facinus admittendum fuit).

<sup>(46)</sup> "Go down" strikes one as odd. Perhaps going southwards is intended (cf. "Go down country to the mountains": NEBm). Or perhaps the verb is not from ירד, "go down" but from a root רוּד = "wander", "roam".

<sup>(47)</sup> MARCUS, *Jephthah and his Vow*, 30-31, 51.

<sup>(48)</sup> This gives some colour to the speculation that in an earlier version of the story the girl was destined not to death but to life as a temple prostitute. So G. Böstrum, cited by MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow*, 31. Böstrum takes לְהַזְנוּת to mean "to prostitute" [לְהַזְנוּת I, "to hire"] (MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow*, 36).

father should carry out his vow does not mean that she thinks him right to have made it in the first place. "...and bewail my virginity". The phrase is peculiar. One usually bewails something that one has lost, or is going to lose<sup>(48)</sup>. Keddell<sup>(49)</sup> and Wood argue that the text favours the idea that the girl faces not death but perpetual virginity, but it is scarcely natural to take bewailing one's virginity to mean bewailing the fact that one has to remain so. Presumably she wishes to lament the fact that she will die a virgin<sup>(50)</sup>. (Having two months to prepare herself would however, one may suppose, scarcely make her fate any more palatable.)

The passage concludes: "And it came about that at the end of two months she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her that he had vowed. She did not know/had never known a man" (11,39a). Sir Thomas Browne argued from the last clause that what the former means is not that he sacrificed her but that he consecrated her to virginity<sup>(51)</sup>. The Christian Fathers, like the Rabbis, generally accepted that what is narrated is the death of the girl. Marcus calls the former construal consequential (she was dedicated to virginity, and remained alive but unmarried), the latter circumstantial (she died without having slept with a man)<sup>(52)</sup>. It is true that if it is circumstantial the clause "she did not know/had never known a man" is not strictly necessary, since the reader already knows that she was a virgin, whereas if it is consequential it is essential. Nevertheless, if one takes the girl to have been sacrificed, as I do, one can see great point in the clause: it stresses the pathos of her fate.

In Gen 22 a heavenly voice stays Abraham's hand, and (as in some versions of the Agamemnon and the Idomeneus stories) substitutes an animal. Phyllis Tribble wryly comments: "Though the son was saved, the daughter is slain"<sup>(53)</sup>. The text does indeed perhaps assume that women are more expendable than men.

<sup>(49)</sup> KEDDELL, *Dissertation*, 77; WOOD, *Distressing Days of the Judges*, 290.

<sup>(50)</sup> Like Antigone in Sophocles *Antigone* 806-816, 876-882, and Polyxena in Euripides *Hecuba* 416. Ps Philo (*LAB* 40) places a poetic lament of 26 lines on the lips of Jephthah's daughter.

<sup>(51)</sup> So too, for example, G. HAKEWILL, *An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God ...* (Oxford <sup>3</sup>1635) 3; W. ROMAINE, *Jephthah's vow fulfilled, and his daughter not sacrificed, proved in a sermon preached before the University at St Mary's in Oxford, Aug. 1744* (London <sup>2</sup>1747); W. WHISTON (tr. and ed.), *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (London [n.d.]) 135 n. 1.

<sup>(52)</sup> MARCUS, *Jephthah and His Vow*, 33.

<sup>(53)</sup> TRIBBLE, *Texts of Terror*, 105.

11,40 is a little enigmatic: “The daughters of Israel went four days each year לתנות, to celebrate/recount/talk about, the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite”. תנה is found in the sense “recount” at Judg 5,11. The Versions have “lament”, which may presuppose a different reading (with perhaps the verb קנן). Browne, citing the translation of Immanuel Tremellius<sup>(54)</sup>, took לתנות to mean “to talk with” [so KJV margin] quoting the verse in favour of his interpretation of v. 39 in terms of consecrated virginity. This, though, is without parallel. The text probably has the young women recalling the memory of the sacrificed maiden and by implication deploring the making and implementation of Jephthah’s vow. At the last the daughter gains recognition; it is she not her father who is remembered, for a whole four days each year.

That the story of Jephthah’s daughter is historical, and that an annual ceremony of commemoration existed at one time in Northern Israel, is quite possible<sup>(55)</sup>. Or perhaps there was a tradition, whether among Israelites or Canaanites, of a four-day period of lamentation that generated, aetiologically, a story of the sacrifice of a young girl, or led to the adoption of such a story from outside Israel, where, as noted earlier, the motif was not uncommon. Who can say? It is more profitable, I think, to proceed as I have done, by seeing how both the sacrifice and the commemorative practice function in the Book of Judges as it has come down to us.

##### 5. *Judg 12,1-7: Jephthah and Gilead versus Ephraim. Jeththah’s Death and Burial.*

Jephthah was punished for his improper oath and its implementation, according to Jewish tradition. Judg 12,7 (MT) says that he “was buried גלעד בערי, in the cities of Gilead”: “this teaches”, says Leviticus Rabbah, “that limb after limb fell off his body and he was buried in many places”<sup>(56)</sup>. בערי is probably in fact an error for בעיר, “in his city” (cf LXX, Pesh). It was sufficient punishment in the eyes of the narrator, one may think, that Jephthah’s action should lead

<sup>(54)</sup> *Testamenti Veteris Biblia Sacra* ..., Jud 11,42 Ibāt filiae Israelitarum ad confabulandum cum filia Jephthaci Gilhaditae, quatuor diebus quotannis. She became, says Junius’ note, a perpetual female Nazirite.

<sup>(55)</sup> Epiphanius (*Adv. Haer.* III.2.24) asserts that at Shechem (Neapolis, in his day) there was a custom of commemorating Korē [Persephone]. He opines that this rite will have been occasioned by the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter.

<sup>(56)</sup> LevR 37,4; similarly GenR 37,4 and QohR 10,15.

to his line dying out. The comparative brevity of his career as a judge (six years: 12,7) may also be construed as a divine punishment<sup>(57)</sup>. The other judges are said to have judged Israel for periods of seven to twenty three years (Ibzan, Jephthah's immediate successor judges Israel for only seven years, but he is blessed with thirty sons and thirty daughters, 12,8-9, whereas Jephthah dies without issue), and Gideon is seemingly ascribed a career of forty years (8,28). It is possible too that one is meant to read the outbreak of civil war between Gilead and Ephraim, resulting in the death of forty-two thousand Ephraimites (Judg 12,1-60), as a punishment for Jephthah's behaviour<sup>(58)</sup>. The people of Ephraim had complained to Gideon in similar terms, of being left out of a campaign, but Gideon's soft answer had turned away their wrath (7,23-8,3). Jephthah answers the Ephraimites much less diplomatically and goes to war against the tribe of Ephraim. Our impression is confirmed that the narrator views Jephthah with some distaste. Man of God he may have been, but a badly flawed one.

## II. Re-reading the Vow Story

One ploy for *relecture* of the story is to interpret it typologically. There is an early example of such a treatment in a marble panel probably executed in Jerusalem in the seventh century that is to be found in St Catherine's monastery on Sinai; here the sacrifice offered by Saint (!) Jephthah (dressed as a Roman soldier and pulling his daughter's head back by holding her hair) is represented alongside that offered by Abraham, as a foreshadowing of the death of Christ<sup>(59)</sup>. There is an illustration of the scene in similar terms in a Bible found in the Bibliothèque d'Arsénal in Paris (Cod. 5211), probably produced in Acre in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. (The scene is also represented, though

<sup>(57)</sup> So REIS, *Reading the Lines*, 128. According to her, however, the punishment is not for making a rash vow but for allowing his daughter to go off and indulge in heathen rites.

<sup>(58)</sup> Jephthah "presides over a bloody civil war in which tens of thousands of fellow Israelites die at the hands of his army" (ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 63).

<sup>(59)</sup> See K. WEITZMANN, "The Jephthah Panel in the Bema of the Church of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964) 341-352 and plates 4-6, 14. It is interesting to note that the Ps Philo has Jephthah's daughter remind her father that Isaac had been glad to let his father sacrifice him (LAB 40; the sacrifice of Isaac is mentioned also in 18 and 32, though oddly not in 8 in the account of Abraham's life).

without the details mentioned above, in other manuscript Bibles<sup>(60)</sup>, and in the easternmost window on the north side of Sainte Chapelle in Paris.) This favourable conception of Jephthah's action is paralleled in the Syriac writers Ephraem and Aphraates:

Praiseworthy also was the deed of Jephthah...his right hand he stretched out and offered the sacrifice...upright was the priest who sacrificed with blood of his own offspring, so that he may be an example of his Lord, who sacrificed with his own blood (Ephraem).

Jephthah was persecuted as Jesus was persecuted...Jephthah vowed a vow and offered up his first-born daughter as a sacrifice to his Father for all the Gentiles (Aphraates)<sup>(61)</sup>.

Such an interpretation is not without its attractions (especially from a feminist perspective, in that it provides a female counterpart to Isaac), but it seems to me to be badly flawed in that it goes against rather than grows out of the original meaning (the "literal sense") of the story<sup>(62)</sup>. Abraham's abortive sacrifice is expressly presented by Genesis as an act of faith, whereas Jephthah's sacrifice is implicitly presented by Judges as resulting from insufficient faith.

One may note that although the Epistle to the Hebrews lists Jephthah among Old Testament heroes of faith (11,32), it does not refer to his sacrifice of his daughter; it seems rather to be thinking of his valour and success in war (11,34). As Augustine notes, Heb 11 praises Gideon too, a man who also behaved badly (he refers to the ephod story in Judg 8,27). It seems, says Augustine, that in bringing salvation to people God uses not only faithful, loyal mentalities but also defective and sinful ones<sup>(63)</sup>. This may well, one suspects, accurately reflect the viewpoint of the author to the Hebrews.

<sup>(60)</sup> See WEITZMANN, "The Jephthah Panel", plates 11-13, 15.

<sup>(61)</sup> The Ephraem quotation comes from his *Carmina Nisibena*, 70; that from Aphraates from *Demonstration* 21.12. The author of the *Questions on Judges* attributed to Bede interprets the story thus: Jephthah stands for Christ, who went to the Gentiles, vowed to God and offered his own flesh (PL 93.428). Weitzmann notes that the late medieval text, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, offers an alternative typological reading, in which Jephthah's daughter is a type of the Virgin Mary (WEITZMANN, "The Jephthah Panel", 352, n. 45.)

<sup>(62)</sup> "The classical figural claim", writes J.D. Dawson, is "that novel Christian meaning *extends without supplanting* the former Jewish meanings...the spirit does not undermine but instead draws out the fullest meaning of the letter; the letter must remain in the spirit because the spirit is the letter fully realized" (J.D. DAWSON, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* [Berkeley 2002] 217).

<sup>(63)</sup> PL 34.813-814. (In 820-821 Augustine offers also an allegorical, and rather far-fetched, reading of the story.)

How then can the authorial meaning of the story of Jephthah's vow instruct and challenge the reader today; how is this text to be actualized for such a reader? In the first place, since Judges sees Jephthah as an instrument of God but deplores his behaviour both in making and in executing his vow, the story says to us, as it did to Augustine, that God uses human beings not only when they are being faithful and dutiful, but also when they are deficient and sinful.

Next, the story can be seen more specifically as a dire warning against rash oath making. Some of the Church Fathers indeed took the passage in this way, notably Chrysostom, Theodoret and Anastasius of Sinai<sup>(64)</sup>. This interpretation of the story may be as old as Qoheleth (Qoh 5,3-4)<sup>(65)</sup>. That Matt 5,33-37 is intended as a reflection on our text, is more than I should want to assert, but it certainly chimes in with the Jephthah story as I have interpreted it. Similarly with Jas 5,12.

The story of Jephthah's daughter is, as observed earlier, a "type-scene", in this instance a type-scene that occurs over a number of cultures. Attention has already been drawn to other instances of rash oaths (though not leading to human sacrifice) in Judges. Two biblical examples of ill-considered vows that lead to a death may be mentioned. Ahasuerus offers Esther whatever she wants, up to half the value of his kingdom (Esther 5,3.6; 7,2) with the result that the Jews escape death and Haman perishes; and Herod promises Herodias / the daughter of Herodias whatever she wishes, again up to the value of half his kingdom, and has to sacrifice the life of John the Baptist (Mark 6,17-19, Matt 14,1-12). How to explain the existence of "type-scenes"? In the case of, say, the type of story in which a man encounters his future wife at a well and goes to eat at her house, the reason why it recurs so often in Scripture is presumably at least in part that it was a common occurrence in real life. But why should the story of a person offered in sacrifice as a result of a rash vow (in real life, an uncommon event, one hopes) appear across the continents? What is

<sup>(64)</sup> See WEITZMANN, "The Jephthah Panel", 350-51 (referring to *PG* 49.147-148; 80.508-509; 89.580-581).

<sup>(65)</sup> The Jephthah story certainly exhibits an attitude to vows comparable to Qoh 5,3-4. RÖMER says, "Judges 11.30-40 is a narrative application of Qohelet's sceptical maxim. This means that the author of the story of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter is a colleague of Qohelet, trained as he was in Jewish and Hellenic culture and criticizing official Dtr theology" (RÖMER, "Why Would the Deuteronomist", 38). Why should not the influence have been in the opposite direction?

the appeal of the story? Is it perhaps the pathos of the setting? In particular, is it the sense that human folly is apt to bring in its train tragic consequences for oneself and/or others?

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#### SUMMARY

In Judges 11 Jephthah is an anti-hero, his rash vow and its implementation being for the Book of Judges symptoms of the defects of pre-monarchical Israel. The daughter is probably sacrificed; the alternative view, that she is consigned to perpetual virginity, has insufficient support in the text. The story speaks still to present-day readers, challenging them not to make ill-considered judgments that may have disastrous consequences; inviting them too to detect a divine purpose working through human beings in their failings as well as their strengths.



## Das Alte Testament und die Todesstrafe

Aus allgemeinen humanitären und/oder ausdrücklich christlichen Gründen lehnen viele Menschen die Todesstrafe kategorisch ab. Stellt man dann im oberflächlichen Blick auf das Alte Testament<sup>(1)</sup> fest, dass dort von der Todesstrafe die Rede zu sein scheint, dann liegt die Gefahr nahe, das gesamte Alte Testament, zumindest aber die betroffenen Rechtssätze und das sich darauf beziehende erzählerische Textmaterial, als blutrünstig, inhuman und mit heutiger Ethik unvereinbar abzuurteilen. Es stellt sich jedoch die Frage, ob es sich bei den einschlägigen Sätzen überhaupt um ein systematisches, durchführbares und durchgeführtes Todesstrafrecht handelt und ob man sie in der Diskussion um die Todesstrafe als Argumentationsgrundlage heranziehen kann.

Der erste Abschnitt stellt zusammen, wo das Alte Testament die Sanktion «der wird gewiss getötet werden» (מוֹת יוֹמָת) vorsieht. In einem Intermezzo ist innezuhalten: Ist das ausführbares und ausgeführtes Recht? Außer Zweifel dürfte stehen, dass es die Todesstrafe gegeben hat<sup>(2)</sup>. Ebenso gibt es im Alten Testament keine normativ-ethische Reflexion über die Erlaubtheit der Todesstrafe<sup>(3)</sup>. Zu untersuchen bleibt aber, welches Verständnis den einschlägigen alttestamentlichen Texten angemessen ist<sup>(4)</sup>. Daher spürt der dritte Teil dem nach, wo im Alten Testament von Todesrechtsprozessen und

<sup>(1)</sup> Die Bezeichnung “Altes Testament” macht deutlich, dass es um die Rezeption der Heiligen Schrift Israels im ersten Teil der christlichen Bibel geht. Dieser hermeneutische Standpunkt wird mit der Arbeit am hebräischen (masoretischen) Text der BHS verbunden, da der hier ins Auge gefasste Kontext nicht über diesen Textumfang hinausgeht.

<sup>(2)</sup> Vgl. B. LANG, “Todesstrafe”, *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* (Hrsg. M. GÖRG – B. LANG) (Zürich 1991-2000) III, 890-893.

<sup>(3)</sup> Daher “dürfen biblische Texte, die die selbstverständliche Anwendung dieser Strafe bezeugen, aus methodischen Gründen nicht als Argumente in die ethische Reflexion und Begründung eingeführt werden”, so M. HEIMBACH-STEINS, “Die Todesstrafe. Ein unerledigtes Problem christlicher Sozialethik”, *Theologie der Gegenwart* 38 (1995) 202.

<sup>(4)</sup> Vgl. die Forderung von H. SEEBASS, “Zum Sklavenrecht in Ex 21,28-32 und der Diskrepanz zwischen Ersatzrecht und Todesrecht”, *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 5 (1999) 184-185, nach dem “Rationale des atl. Todesrechts zu forschen” und eine Rechtshermeneutik anzuwenden, “die auf Verstehen, nicht auf Apologetik aus ist”.

Hinrichtungen die Rede ist. Aus diesen Überlegungen sind dann ausführliche Schlussfolgerungen zu ziehen.

## I. Die Todesstrafe im Alten Testament

### 1. *Todesstrafe vs. Blutrache*

Kain gilt als der erste Mörder der Menschheitsgeschichte. An diesem Fall zeigt die Bibel, wie sie die Tötung eines Menschen durch einen Menschen grundsätzlich sieht: «Das Blut deines Bruders schreit zu mir vom Ackerboden». Mit diesem Satz stellt Gott gegenüber Kain (Gen 4,10) fest, dass dies keine Sache allein zwischen Menschen ist, sondern dass immer Gott mit betroffen ist. Zwischen Menschen ist ein solcher Mord ein Fall für die Blutrache, vor der Gott Kain mit einem Zeichen schützen muss (4,14-15). In Gen 9,5-6 sind menschlicher und göttlicher Aspekt miteinander verknüpft, so dass deutlich wird, was Gott mit dem Töten eines Menschen durch einen Menschen zu tun hat: «Wenn aber euer Blut vergossen wird, fordere ich Rechenschaft, und zwar für das Blut eines jeden von euch. Von jedem Tier fordere ich Rechenschaft und vom Menschen. Für das Leben des Menschen fordere ich Rechenschaft von jedem seiner Brüder. Wer Menschenblut vergießt, dessen Blut wird durch Menschen vergossen. Denn: Als Abbild Gottes hat er den Menschen gemacht» (9,5-6)<sup>(5)</sup>. Was hier konstatiert wird, ist das eherner Gesetz der Blutrache<sup>(6)</sup>. Was als Begründung dahinter steht, ist noch grundsätzlicher: Wer einen Menschen tötet, vergreift sich am Abbild Gottes und greift damit in den Kompetenzbereich Gottes ein<sup>(7)</sup>. Das

<sup>(5)</sup> Zur Stelle vgl. die Kommentare sowie u.a. B. DIEBNER – H. SCHULT, “Das Problem der Todesstrafe an Tier und Mensch in Genesis 9,5-6”, *DBAT* 6 (1974) 2-5; A. ERNST, “‘Wer Menschenblut vergießt...’. Zur Übersetzung von בָּאֵדָם in Gen 9,6”, *ZAW* 102 (1990) 252-253; O.H. STECK, “Der Mensch und die Todesstrafe. Exegetisches zur Übersetzung der Präposition Beth in Gen 9,6a”, *TZ* 53 (1997) 118-130.

<sup>(6)</sup> Vgl. dazu u.a. E. MERZ, *Die Blutrache bei den Israeliten* (BWA[N]T 20; Leipzig 1916); K. KOCH, “Der Spruch ‘Sein Blut bleibe auf seinem Haupt’ und die israelitische Auffassung vom vergossenen Blut”, *VT* 12 (1962) 396-416; K.-H. SINGER, “Blutrache”, *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* I, 311. Rechtstheoretisch steht der Gedanke der Talion dahinter, vgl. u.a. A. RUWE, “*Heiligkeitgesetz*” und “*Priesterschrift*”. Literaturgeschichtliche und rechtssystematische Untersuchungen zu Leviticus 17,1-26,2 (FAT 26; Tübingen 1999) 336-337.

<sup>(7)</sup> Vgl. J. GABRIEL, “Die Todesstrafe im Lichte des Alten Testaments”, *Theologische Fragen der Gegenwart*. Festschrift Kardinal Dr. Theodor Innitzer

ist die große Überschrift in der biblischen Anthropologie, unter der alles Folgende zu sehen ist.

Diesen Grundsatz sanktioniert zunächst die Institution der Blutrache, die nur die Fälle von Totschlag und Mord betrifft. Sie ist als ein Moment der Selbsthilfe — unabhängig von Rechtsinstitutionen — von der Todesstrafe zu unterscheiden<sup>(8)</sup>. Die Todesstrafe setzt bereits ein verfasstes Recht mit den zugehörigen Institutionen und damit eine gewisse Rechtskultur voraus. Neben den Rechtssätzen, die bestimmte Tatbestände mit der Todesstrafe sanktionieren, sind Angaben darüber unabdingbar, wie ein Prozess abläuft, wer am Ende das Urteil fällt und wie die Hinrichtung durchzuführen ist<sup>(9)</sup>.

## 2. "Todesrecht" <sup>(10)</sup>

Das Alte Testament kennt Rechtssätze, die auf die stereotype Rechtsfolge hinauslaufen: מוֹת יוֹמָת (*mōt yūmāt*: Infinitivus absolutus Grundstamm + Präfixkonjugation H-Stamm passiv der Wurzel מוֹת «sterben»). Die Wurzelparonomasie mit dem Infinitiv dient dabei als modale Verstärkung der Hauptaussage, die wörtlich so übersetzt werden kann: «er wird gewiss getötet werden»<sup>(11)</sup>. Der Vordersatz

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(Wien 1952) 70. Gen 9,5-6 sei nicht als ein formeller Rechtssatz zu betrachten, und daher scheide die Möglichkeit aus, dass es darum gehe, einer Obrigkeit das "Schwertrecht" zuzuteilen und sie zu ermächtigen, Mörder zu töten.

<sup>(8)</sup> Vgl. dazu u.a. A. BONDOLFI, "Die Todesstrafe: Eine ethisch-theologische Stellungnahme", *Ethik und Selbsterhaltung*. Sozialethische Anstöße (Hrsg. A. BONDOLFI) (Freiburg/CH – Freiburg i. Br. 1990) 127-128; A. RUWE, "Das Zusammenwirken von 'Gerichtsverhandlung', 'Blutrache' und 'Asyl'. Rechtsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu den todesrechtsrelevanten Asylbestimmungen im Hexateuch", *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 6 (2000) 190-221.

<sup>(9)</sup> Vgl. u.a. KOCH, "Spruch", 403; H. McKEATING, "The Development of the Law of Homicide in Ancient Israel", *VT* 25 (1975) 46-47; BONDOLFI, "Todesstrafe", 128; HEIMBACH-STEINS, "Todesstrafe", 201.

<sup>(10)</sup> Vgl. H. SCHULZ, *Das Todesrecht im Alten Testament*. Studien zur Rechtsform der Mot-Jumat-Sätze (BZAW 114; Berlin 1969). Zur problematischen Wortneuschöpfung "Todesrecht" durch Schulz vgl. u.a. E.S. GERSTENBERGER, "'... (He/They) Shall Be Put To Death'. Life-Preserving Divine Threats in Old Testament Law", *Ex Auditu* 11 (1995) 43-61.

<sup>(11)</sup> E.S. GERSTENBERGER, *Das dritte Buch Mose: Leviticus* (ATD 6; Göttingen 1993) 261 u.ö., übersetzt mit "muß sterben"; H.J. BOECKER, *Redeformen des Rechtslebens im Alten Testament* (WMANT 14; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1964) 144, mit "er soll unbedingt getötet werden", so auch RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 221 u.ö. — Die Septuaginta übersetzt nicht stereotyp mit der gleichen Wendung, lediglich dort, wo die Formel mehrmals hintereinander

kann dabei z.B. aus einem Partizip bestehen, das durch einen weiteren Satz (etwa einen Relativsatz) fortgeführt werden kann: «Wer einen Menschen schlägt, und (so dass) der stirbt, ...» (מכה איש ומת Ex 21,12). Damit stehen diese sogenannten “Todesrechtssätze” oder besser: *mot*-Sätze<sup>(12)</sup> zwischen dem “kasuistischen” und dem “apodiktischen”<sup>(13)</sup> Recht (auch Prohibitivrecht genannt). Statt die *mot*-Sätze in eine der beiden Rechtsformen einzuordnen, erscheint es sinnvoller, eine gesonderte Kategorie anzusetzen<sup>(14)</sup>. In sprechakttheoretischer Hinsicht sind die *mot*-Sätze “Todesdeklarationen”. Ein deklarativer Sprechakt schafft — meist in einem institutionellen Rahmen — eine neue Wirklichkeit bzw. gültige Tatsachen. Mit den *mot*-Sätzen wird deklariert, dass derjenige, der gegen ein im Prohibitivrecht ausgedrücktes Verbot verstoßen hat, unentrinnbar dem Tode verfallen ist<sup>(15)</sup>. Damit basieren die *mot*-Sätze auf einem normierten Rechtsverhältnis zwischen bestimmten Taten und der Todessphäre. Sie sind kein Strafrecht im engeren Sinne, das Tatbestände und Strafen in verschiedenen Graden miteinander verknüpft und mit *direktiven* Sprechakten

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kommt, stehen gleiche oder ähnliche Übersetzungen. “*Môt yûmat* war den Übersetzern also nicht als feststehende Formel bekannt”: V. WAGNER, *Rechtssätze in gebundener Sprache und Rechtssatzreihen im israelitischen Recht* (BZAW 127; Berlin – New York 1972) 22.

<sup>(12)</sup> Die Bezeichnung *mot*-Satz wird im Folgenden verwendet, da sie bei der formalen Gestalt (Infinitivus absolutus) ansetzt. Der Begriff “Todesrecht” ist dagegen mit zahlreichen inhaltlichen Vorentscheidungen belastet. — Zur formalen Analyse der *mot*-Sätze vgl. u.a. H. SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben in der Gesetzesliteratur des Pentateuch* (Bonn 1969) 96-111.

<sup>(13)</sup> Vgl. A. ALT, “Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts” [1934], *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (München 1968) I, 278-332. Zur Kritik an Alts zeitbedingter (1934!) Sichtweise vgl. u.a. GERSTENBERGER, “Divine Threats”, 43, 60; ID., “‘Apodiktisches’ Recht? ‘Todes’ Recht?”, *Gottes Recht als Lebensraum*. Festschrift H.J. Boecker (Hrsg. P. MOMMER u.a.) (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1993) 7-20.

<sup>(14)</sup> Vgl. SCHULZ, *Todesrecht*, 83. — Zur Diskussion vgl. u.a. auch K.-J. ILLMAN – H.-J. FABRY, “מִוֶּת *mût* II-X”, *TWAT* IV, 779-780; E.S. GERSTENBERGER, “Apodictic Law? Casuistic Law? Sacred Law? The Quest for Everlasting Norms and the Inadequacy of Legal Terminology in Biblical Studies”, *Los caminos inexhaustibles de la Palabra*. Festschrift J. Severino Croatto (Hrsg. G. HANSEN) (Buenos Aires 2000) 140.

<sup>(15)</sup> H. GRAF REVENTLOW, “Sein Blut komme über sein Haupt”, *VT* 10 (1960) 311-327, und KOCH, “Spruch”, 402, gehen von einer Fluchformel aus. BOECKER, *Redeformen*, 144-145, wendet sich dagegen. Für K. Koch und E.S. Gerstenberger (“Divine Threats”, 45-47) ist das Ausrufen des *mot*-Satzes keine Strafe im juristischen Sinn.

Strafvollzüge anordnet. Die *mot*-Sätze sind vielmehr eine deklaratorische Normierung, die eine bestimmte Auswahl aus den vorher durch Prohibitive verbotenen Tatbeständen der Todesverfallenheit zurechnet — aber keine konkrete Strafe anordnet.

### 3. Tatbestände

Zunächst ist eine systematisierende Übersicht über die Tatbestände zu geben, die durch die *mot*-Sätze sanktioniert werden:

#### a) Totschlag/Mord<sup>(16)</sup>

Den Grundsatz formuliert Ex 21,12: «Wer einen Menschen so schlägt, dass er stirbt, der wird gewiss getötet werden» (vgl. ebenso knapp Lev 24,17). Die folgenden beiden Verse (Ex 21,13-14) differenzieren nach Unabsichtlichkeit und Vorsätzlichkeit<sup>(17)</sup>. Die Reihe in Num 35,16-21 präzisiert die Vorsätzlichkeit anhand der Tatwaffe (Eisengerät, großer Stein, Holz, mit der Hand in feindlicher Absicht). Das gesamte Kapitel Num 35 regelt die Einrichtung von Asylstädten für diejenigen, die ohne Vorsatz einen Menschen getötet haben (vgl. Dtn 19,1-10; Jos 20,1-9)<sup>(18)</sup>. Sie können sich vor dem Bluträcher in eine der festgelegten Städte flüchten, damit sie nicht vor der Untersuchung des Falles getötet werden. Ist erwiesen, dass kein Vorsatz vorlag, kann das Asyl (und die mit dem Tod des Hohenpriesters verbundene endgültige Amnestie) gewährt werden. Gewisse Tatwerkzeuge, die genannt werden, implizieren aber auf jeden Fall Vorsatz. Ist der Täter damit als vorsätzlicher Totschläger oder Mörder erwiesen, ist auch keine Auslösung durch einen Geldbetrag möglich [Num 35,31<sup>(19)</sup>; vgl. Dtn 19,11-13]. Die Umsetzung des *mot yumat* «der wird gewiss getötet werden» beschränkt Num 35,19 auf den zuständigen Bluträcher (גֹּאֵל הַדָּם), der den Mörder töten darf. Das

<sup>(16)</sup> Vgl. P. HAAS, “‘Die He Shall Surely Die’. The Structure of Homicide in Biblical Law”, *Semeia* 45 (1989) 67-87.

<sup>(17)</sup> Zu Ex 21,12-17 vgl. u.a. L. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Das Bundesbuch* (Ex 20,22-23,33). Studien zu seiner Entstehung und Theologie (BZAW 188; Berlin – New York 1990) 38-39; 213-234; RUWE, “Zusammenwirken”, 199-200; F. CRÜSEMANN, *Die Tora*. Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes (München 1992) 205-208.

<sup>(18)</sup> Vgl. u.a. McKEATING, “Law on Homicide”, 53-55; RUWE, “Zusammenwirken”, 209-221.

<sup>(19)</sup> Das gilt auch für König David: 2 Sam 21,3-4. Vgl. A. LEMAIRE, “Essai sur le système pénal dans l’Ancien Israël”, *Droit et Cultures* 11 (1986) 119; McKEATING, “Law on Homicide”, 55-56.

Gesetz der Blutrache erfährt damit eine erhebliche Einschränkung und Kanalisierung<sup>(20)</sup>: Es wird von der Rechtskultur für die Ausführung des *mot*-Satzes instrumentalisiert<sup>(21)</sup>. Das erlaubt den Umkehrschluss, dass feste Institutionen für Todesrechtsprozesse und vor allem für Hinrichtungen (Scharfrichter) in der Perspektive dieser Texte nicht vorgesehen sind. Die Exekution erfolgt durch den Bluträcher, der damit nur in bestimmten Fällen und nach genauer vorheriger Prüfung die Blutrache vollstrecken darf (vgl. Num 35,26-27; Dtn 19,6).

Die Institution der Blutrache kann auch einen Schutz bedeuten<sup>(22)</sup>. Dies gilt für den Schuldklaven, der sich zur Abzahlung eines Darlehens in die Abhängigkeit eines Gläubigers verkauft hat. Es war gang und gäbe, dass Sklaven und auch Schuldklaven zur Disziplinierung geschlagen wurden — doch die Verfügungsgewalt des Herrn ist begrenzt: Nach Ex 21,20 steht das Schlagen eines Sklaven oder einer Sklavin unter dem Gesetz der Blutrache. Der Samaritanus hat hier sogar die klare Bestimmung des *mot*-Satzes zu Lasten des schlagenden Herrn, während der masoretische Text liest: נקם נקם «er (der Sklave) [oder auch: es, die Sache] muss unbedingt gerächt werden». Diese offenere Formulierung ermöglicht eine “stellvertretende Talion” für den Fall, dass der getötete Schuldklave oder die Schuldklavin noch ein Kind oder ein Jugendlicher war. Dann wird nicht der Herr, der getötet hat, direkt angegangen, sondern nach dem Talionsprinzip eines seiner Kinder. Angesichts der Grausamkeit dieser Vorstellung ist zu bedenken, worum es bei diesem Blutrachegedanken geht: um den Schutz von Personen, die sich (oder ihre Kinder) aus einer finanziellen Notlage heraus in die Abhängigkeit eines Schuldklaven verkauft haben.

#### b) Menschenraub

Ziel dieses Vergehens war es, durch den Verkauf des geraubten Menschen als Sklaven einen Gewinn zu erzielen. Die Sklaverei jedoch kann mitunter den Tod bedeuten oder ihm gleichkommen, da der Mensch als Sklave nahezu aller Rechte zur Selbstbestimmung beraubt ist. Insofern steht Ex 21,16 im engen Kontext mit 21,14, der

<sup>(20)</sup> Vgl. RUWE, “Zusammenwirken”, 192-193; CRÜSEMAN, *Tora*, 206; SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 224; GABRIEL, “Todesstrafe”, 71. — Dass eine solche Kanalisierung nötig ist, zeigen Stellen wie 2 Sam 14,1-11 und 2 Sam 3,22-39; vgl. McKEATING, “Law on Homicide”, 50-52.

<sup>(21)</sup> Vgl. LANG, “Todesstrafe”, 890.

<sup>(22)</sup> Vgl. zum Folgenden SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 70-74.

Bestimmung für Totschlag/Mord (vgl. auch Dtn 24,7). Bemerkenswert ist, dass für «rauben» oder «entführen» sowohl in Ex 21,16 als auch in Dtn 24,7 das Verb für «stehlen» aus dem siebten Gebot (Ex 20,15; Dtn 5,19) steht, so dass von den Bestimmungen über den Menschenraub auch der Prohibitiv «du sollst nicht stehlen» eine Vertiefung erfährt: Es geht im Dekaloggebot nicht nur um Eigentumsdelikte an Sachen und Tieren, sondern auch um Menschenraub!

#### c) Vergehen gegen Vater und Mutter

Sowohl das Schlagen (Ex 21,15) als auch das Verfluchen (Ex 21,17; Lev 20,9) der eigenen Eltern wird als so schwerwiegendes Vergehen eingestuft, dass dafür nur die Todessanktion genannt wird. Insofern findet sich hier das negative Gegenstück zum Elterngebot im Dekalog (Ex 20,12; Dtn 5,16). Als Rechtsinstanz wurde das Familienoberhaupt angenommen, das dann gleichzeitig der Angegriffene und derjenige sei, der das Todesurteil spreche und vollziehe<sup>(23)</sup>. Die Nähe zu Sprichwörtern, die die Solidarität der jüngeren gegenüber der älteren Generation einschärfen und Fehlverhalten gegenüber den alt gewordenen Eltern brandmarken (Spr 19,26; 20,20; 28,24; 30,17; vgl. Spr 6,20), legt jedoch eine andere Interpretation nahe: "In Ex 21,15.17 spricht nicht der pater familias in der Vollkraft seiner Jahre als oberste Rechtsautorität seiner Familie, sondern hier werden aus weisheitlicher Tradition in der Form apodiktischer Rechtssätze die erwachsen gewordenen Kinder gewarnt, ihre gegenüber den alt gewordenen Eltern gewonnene physische (נכדה) und psychische (קלל) Überlegenheit nicht zu mißbrauchen"<sup>(24)</sup>.

#### d) Sexuelle Vorschriften

Eine ganze Reihe von Inzest-Vorschriften und anderen Regeln für Sexualität und Ehe werden mit der Todesdeklaration versehen<sup>(25)</sup>. Im Einzelnen sind dies: Verkehr mit einem Tier (Ex 22,18; Lev

<sup>(23)</sup> Vgl. G. LIEDKE, *Gestalt und Bezeichnung alttestamentlicher Rechtssätze*. Eine formgeschichtlich-terminologische Studie (WMANT 39; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1971) 132-133.

<sup>(24)</sup> SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 220. Vgl. ferner P.R. CALLAWAY, "Deut 21:18-21: Proverbial Wisdom and Law", *JBL* 103 (1984) 341-352.

<sup>(25)</sup> Siehe Lev 20; vgl. GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus*, 268-275; RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 229-241; K. GRÜN WALDT, *Das Heiligkeitgesetz Lev 17-26*. Ursprüngliche Gestalt, Tradition und Theologie (BZAW 271; Berlin – New York 1999).

20,15: Mann; 16: Frau); homosexueller Verkehr zwischen Männern (Lev 20,13: beide Männer); Verkehr eines Mannes mit einer verheirateten Frau (Lev 20,10: Ehebrecher und Ehebrecherin; vgl. Dtn 22,22)<sup>(26)</sup>; mit der Frau seines Vaters (Lev 20,11: beide); mit seiner Schwiegertochter (Lev 20,12: beide). Im Kontext von Lev 20 finden sich noch weitere Bestimmungen, die nicht mit dem *mot*-Satz sanktioniert sind, aber ebenfalls den Tod nach sich ziehen: Die Heirat einer Frau und deren Mutter wird als Blutschande deklariert. Alle drei Personen sollen verbrannt werden (Lev 20,14). Implizit kann man hier das Verbot des Inzests mit der eigenen Tochter (und der Stieftochter), das ausdrücklich nirgends genannt ist, vermuten<sup>(27)</sup>. Weitere Inzestvergehen werden nicht mit einer Todessanktion versehen (20,17-21)<sup>(28)</sup>. „Ausgemerzt“ (כרת; «schneiden») sollen Geschwister und Halbgeschwister werden, die sexuell miteinander verkehren (Lev 20,17), ebenso ein sexuell verkehrendes Paar, bei dem die Frau menstruiert (20,18). Die genaue Bedeutung der כרת-Sanktion „bleibt in allen Belegen im Heiligkeitgesetz und im übrigen priester(schrift)lichen Textbereich erstaunlich offen“<sup>(29)</sup>. Es geht nicht um eine Todesstrafe, sondern um das Ende einer genealogischen Linie. Ebenso ist der vor allem in Lev 20 (und an anderen Stellen) auftretende Blut-Satz («sein/ihr Blut sei auf ihm/ihnen») keine Strafbestimmung<sup>(30)</sup>, sondern eine „Schutzformel“, die verhindern soll, dass von der Hinrichtung eines Menschen irgendwelche negativen Folgen („Blutschuld“) auf die Hinrichtenden übergehen: Wer an einer Hinrichtung eines rechtmäßig Verurteilten teilnimmt, verunreinigt sich nicht<sup>(31)</sup>.

<sup>(26)</sup> Ein anders gelagerter Fall ist Lev 19,20-22; vgl. u.a. H. McKEATING, „Sanctions against Adultery in Ancient Israelite Society, with some Reflections on Methodology in the Study of Old Testament Ethics“, *JSOT* 11 (1979) 57-72. Siehe auch Anmerkung 76.

<sup>(27)</sup> Vgl. J.E. MILLER, „Sexual Offences in Genesis“, *JSOT* 90 (2000) 41-53.

<sup>(28)</sup> Die Drohung der Kinderlosigkeit ist menschlichem Zugriff entzogen (vgl. Gen 30,2) und damit eine Gottesstrafe, vgl. ebenso «sie sollen ausgemerzt werden» (Lev 20,18), «... muss die Folgen seiner Schuld tragen» (19,20), «sie sollen kinderlos bleiben» (20,21), «ihr Blut soll auf sie kommen» (27). Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, „Apodiktisches Recht?“, 19; ID., „Apodictic Law?“, 141; RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 235-241.

<sup>(29)</sup> RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 238. Vgl. ferner J. MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16* [1991]. 17–22 [2000] (AncB; New York et al. 1991/2000) 457-460; SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben*, 141-179.

<sup>(30)</sup> Gegen GRAF REVENTLOW, „Sein Blut“, 318.

<sup>(31)</sup> Vgl. KOCH, „Spruch“, 400-401.



## d) Vergehen gegen Gott und seine Gebote

In den Kontext von Religion und Kult fallen folgende Vorschriften: Das Sabbatgebot wird in Ex 31,14-15 allgemein und in Num 15,35 in einem speziellen Fall mit dem *mot*-Satz abgesichert. Ex 35,2 wiederholt die Sanktion für die Arbeit am Sabbat ohne Infinitivus absolutus. Von der Teilnahme an anderen, fremden Kulturen wird das Kinderopfer für "Moloch" (Lev 20,1-5) besonders streng verurteilt: Neben dem *mot*-Satz steht zum einen die konkrete Anordnung, dass die Bürger des Landes (עַם הָאָרֶץ) den, der eines seiner Kinder dem Moloch opfert, steinigen sollen; zum anderen, dass Gott selbst ihn aus dem Volk ausmerzt, ferner alle, die sich dem Molochdienst hingeben und auch diejenigen, die vor dieser Tat die Augen verschließen und den Täter nicht steinigen. Damit hat der Tatbestand des Kinderopfers an Moloch die umfangreichste und schwerwiegendste Sanktionierung erfahren<sup>(32)</sup>. Ebenfalls gegen fremde Kultpraktiken und Aberglauben richtet sich die Bestrafung von Totenbeschwörung und Wahrsagerei: Dabei wird das Einholen entsprechender Informationen damit bestraft, dass Gott den aus dem Volk ausmerzt, der sich an Totenbeschwörer und Wahrsager wendet (Lev 20,6), während die Frauen und Männer, die diese mantischen Praktiken ausüben, nach Lev 20,27 sowohl mit dem *mot*-Satz als auch mit der Drohung der Steinigung<sup>(33)</sup> gleich mehrfach der Todessanktion unterliegen. Ohne *mot*-Satz wird die Ausübung von magischen Praktiken<sup>(34)</sup> mit dem Tod bestraft (Ex 22,17)<sup>(35)</sup> sowie derjenige, der einer anderen Gottheit außer YHWH

<sup>(32)</sup> Vgl. RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 242.

<sup>(33)</sup> Zur Steinigung vgl. u.a. SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben*, 127-140 ("die Strafe κατ' ἐξοχήν für Vergehen gegen das Heilige"); A.S. KAPELRUD, "סָקַל *sāqal*", *TWAT* V, 945-948; K.-D. SCHUNCK, "רָגַם *rāgam*", *TWAT* VII, 345-347; A. BÜCHLER, "Die Todesstrafen der Bibel und der nachbiblischen Zeit", *MGWJ* 50 (1906) 539-565; 664-706, hier 664-691. Beide Begriffe (סָקַל und רָגַם) können sowohl für Hinrichtungen aufgrund eines Rechtssatzes als auch für Steinigungen im Affekt oder bei "Lynchjustiz" verwendet werden (bei רָגַם vgl. z.B. Jos 7,25; Ez 16,40 einerseits und 1 Kön 12,18/2 Chr 10,18; 2 Chr 24,21 andererseits).

<sup>(34)</sup> Das feminine Partizip bezeichnet nicht ausschließlich weibliche Magie (die Übersetzung "Hexe" ist unzutreffend), sondern die Ausübung einer bestimmten Praxis, hier der Magie. Entsprechend wählt die Septuaginta ein maskulines Substantiv im Plural: φαρμακοῦς.

<sup>(35)</sup> Vgl. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 329-330. Nach SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben*, 198, ist "mit dieser Sanktion nicht an ein aktives Töten gedacht", sondern daran, den Zauberei Betreibenden die Lebensgrundlage zu entziehen, indem man sie nicht in Anspruch nimmt und nicht bezahlt.

Opfer darbringt (Ex 22,19)<sup>(36)</sup>. Schließlich untersteht die Schmähung des Gottesnamens der Todesdeklaration (Lev 24,16), sie betrifft ausdrücklich Einheimische wie Fremde und wird im Kontext einer konkreten Fallerzählung geäußert. Als Ausführungsbestimmung wird die Hinrichtungsart der Steinigung angeordnet und auch durchgeführt (24,23). Der *mot*-Satz von 24,16 hat offenbar weitere Rechtssätze angezogen (24,17-22), darunter auch die Wiederholung der Bestimmung über den Totschlag (Lev 24,17.21; vgl. Ex 21,12).

#### f) Weitere *mot*-Sätze

Vereinzelte *mot*-Sätze finden sich auch außerhalb der Reihenbildungen in Ex 21 und Lev 20<sup>(37)</sup>. Noch im Kontext von Religion und Kult ist Ex 19,12 zu nennen: Vor der Erscheinung Gottes am Sinai wird der Berg als heiliges Sperrgebiet deklariert, um die Trennung von "heilig" und "profan" deutlich zu markieren. Diese Unterscheidung ist notwendig, denn nur was unterschieden ist, kann sich begegnen. Daher wird die Vermischung von heilig und profan — hier in Form der Berührung des Berges als Offenbarungsort Gottes — streng verboten und mit dem *mot*-Satz sanktioniert. — In diese Richtung gehen auch die Bestimmungen über die Vernichtungsweihe, bei der es sich nicht um eine Todesstrafe handelt, sondern um den Vollzug eines religiösen Gelübdes. Das gilt auch für den Schwur von Mizpa in Ri 21,5 und das Gottesurteil in 1 Sam 14,44. — Der *mot*-Satz in Ez 18,13 über den gewalttätigen und frevelhaften Sohn kann keine rechtlichen Implikationen vor einem menschlichen Gericht haben. Die genannten Tatbestände (Unterdrückung von Armen und Elenden, Einbehaltung des Pfandes, Verehrung fremder Götter und andere, nicht spezifizierte Gräueltaten) sind kaum strafrechtlich verhandelbar. Daher ist hier nicht an eine Todesstrafe gedacht, sondern an ein göttliches Gericht, das z.B. darin bestehen kann, dass der Sünder (verfrüht) sterben muss. — Die Androhung einer Todesstrafe liegt in Gen 26,11 vor, allerdings ist die Anordnung des Königs Abimelech<sup>(38)</sup> auf den einmaligen Fall

<sup>(36)</sup> Für das Bundesbuch gilt insgesamt: "Über die Art des Strafvollzugs wird ebensowenig gesagt wie über das vorausgehende Gerichtsverfahren", so LANG, "Todesstrafe", 890. Zu Ex 22,19 vgl. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 316-322.

<sup>(37)</sup> Vgl. V. WAGNER, "Umfang und Inhalt der *mōt-jūmaṭ*-Reihe", *OLZ* 63 (1968) 325-328; ID., *Rechtssätze*, 16-31.

<sup>(38)</sup> Nach LIEDKE, *Gestalt*, 121-124, gibt es noch weitere Belege für "den König als Autorität des apodiktischen Rechtssatzes", vgl. 2 Sam 12,5; 2 Kön 10,19.24, ferner müssen aber auch folgende Institutionen und Personen genannt

von Isaak und Rebekka beschränkt, deren Unversehrtheit mit dem *mot*-Satz gesichert wird. Es kommt jedoch zu keiner Übertretung. In der Parallelerzählung von Abram und Sarai beim Pharao in Gen 12,10-20 fehlt ein derartiger Satz. In Gen 20,1-18 (Abraham und Sara in Gerar) droht Gott dem König Abimelech, dass er sterben müsse, wenn er Sara nicht an Abraham zurückgebe.

#### 4. Weitere Rechtssätze im Kontext der Todesstrafe

Mit den *mot*-Sätzen allein ist das Spektrum noch nicht abgedeckt. In mehreren Fällen fehlt der Infinitivus absolutus, so z.B. in der Bestimmung, dass der "Fremde", d.h. der unbefugte Nicht-Priester, der sich dem heiligen Zelt nähert, getötet werden muss (Num 1,51; 3,10.38; 18,7)<sup>(39)</sup>. Ebenfalls im religiös-kultischen Bereich stehen die Anordnungen, dass wer auch immer zum Abfall von *YHWH* und zur Verehrung fremder Götter geheim oder öffentlich anstiftet, sei es ein Prophet, die eigene Familie oder eine ganze Stadt, getötet werden soll [Dtn 13,2-19<sup>(40)</sup>; 17,2-7]. Getötet werden soll ferner derjenige, der nicht auf den Urteilsspruch des Priestergerichts hört (Dtn 17,12) und

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werden: Priester (2 Kön 11,8.15), Heerführer (1 Sam 11,7), Familienväter (Gen 31,32; 38,24; 44,9.10), der Stämmebund (Ri 21,5; Jos 1,18; 2,19) sowie *YHWH* selbst (Gen 4,15; Ex 19,12; Num 14,23; Jos 7,15. Eine eindeutige Rechtsinstitution als Autorität für das Aufstellen und vor allem für das Ausführen des so genannten "apodiktischen Rechts" fehlt also.

<sup>(39)</sup> Mit SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben*, 117, ist nicht an eine Todesstrafe zu denken, sondern an die Auffassung, nach der die Begegnung mit dem Heiligen tötet, wenn nicht besondere Vorkehrungen getroffen werden. Vgl. u.a. Ex 28,43; Lev 16,1-2.13; Num 4,15.19-20; 17,28; 18,3.22.

<sup>(40)</sup> SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben*, 118, sieht in Dtn 13,2-6 "eher ein rhetorisches Predigtbeispiel als ein eigentliches Gesetz". – Zu Dtn 13,10 vgl. B.M. LEVINSON, "'But You Shall Surely Kill Him!'" The Text-Critical and Neo-Assyrian Evidence for MT Deuteronomy 13:10", *Bundesdokument und Gesetz* (Hrsg. G. BRAULIK) (HBS 4; Freiburg i.Br. 1995) 37-63, der gegen die Leseweise der Septuaginta und den Emendationsvorschlag von BHS für den masoretischen Text optiert und dafür Material aus den antiken Versionen und neuassyrischen Vertragsdokumenten anführt: Die Loyalität gegenüber dem obersten Herrscher schaltet jegliche Rechtsinstitutionen (Prozess, Zeugen) aus. In Dtn 13,10MT wird der Abfall von *YHWH* als "religious emergency" (62) gesehen, die nur durch radikale Tötung der Schuldigen abgewendet werden kann. Paralleltexte dazu sind die Erzählung von der Tötung von nahezu 3000 Mann durch die Leviten nach der Sünde mit dem Goldenen Kalb (Ex 32,26-28) sowie die Eifertat des Pinhas (Num 25,1-18). Von einer "Todesstrafe" sollte hier aufgrund der religiösen Ausnahme-situation nicht gesprochen werden.

der falsche Prophet (Dtn 18,20; vgl. Sach 13,3). Eine besondere Sanktion für einen Einzelfall ist die Verbrennung einer Priestertochter, die sich und damit auch ihren Vater entweiht hat, weil sie sich als Prostituierte hingegeben hat (Lev 21,9)<sup>(41)</sup>.

In den zwischenmenschlich-familiären Bereich gehören folgende Todessanktionen: der störrische Sohn, der sich fortwährend seinen Eltern widersetzt (Dtn 21,18-21)<sup>(42)</sup>, die Braut, die ihre voreheliche Jungfräulichkeit nicht nachweisen kann (Dtn 22,13-21), der Vergewaltiger eines unberührten verlobten Mädchens, wenn die Tat auf freiem Felde ohne Zeugen stattgefunden hat (Dtn 22,25-27), jedoch beide, wenn die Tat in der Stadt begangen wurde und das Mädchen offenbar nicht um Hilfe geschrien hatte (22,23-24). Die Hinrichtungsart ist die Steinigung<sup>(43)</sup>.

Der einzige Fall, wo im kasuistischen Recht<sup>(44)</sup> eine Todessanktion ausgesprochen wird, ist der Beispielsfall des stößigen Rindes (Ex 21,28-32): Die Möglichkeit, dass der fahrlässig handelnde Eigentümer sein Leben durch eine finanzielle Ersatzleistung auslösen kann, zeigt, dass die Sühne für den getöteten Menschen durch die in jedem Falle angesetzte Steinigung des Rindes erfolgt. Zugleich aber tangiert die Tötung eines Menschen das "Todesrecht"<sup>(45)</sup>, so dass ein Kompromiss

<sup>(41)</sup> Zur Verbrennung als Sanktion vgl. nur noch Lev 20,14 (s.o.), ferner Gen 38,24. Vgl. BÜCHLER, "Todesstrafen", 542-562. Die Mischna (mSan VII, 2) missbilligt die Exekution einer wegen Unzucht verurteilten Priestertochter.

<sup>(42)</sup> Eine buchstäbliche Todesstrafe ginge hier weit über alles hinaus, was in Israels altorientalischer Umwelt an Strafen vorgesehen ist. Im antiken Vorderen Orient werden aufrührerische Kinder, die gewaltsam gegen ihre Eltern vorgehen, als Gefährdung der Gesellschaftsordnung betrachtet. Nie jedoch wird die Todesstrafe ausgesprochen. Innerbiblisch ist beim Tatbestand der groben Missachtung der Eltern in der Weisheitsliteratur eine gesellschaftliche Ächtung vorgesehen, vgl. Spr 30,17. Vgl. LEMAIRE, "Système pénal", 119. Die Vorschrift ist als erzieherische Abschreckung aufzufassen, vgl. J.H. TIGAY, *Deuteronomy* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia 1996) 196-197; GERSTENBERGER, "Apodiktisches Recht?", 18; SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 219; CALLAWAY, "Deut 21:18-21", 352; CRÜSEMANN, *Tora*, 304. — E. BELLEFONTAINE, "Deuteronomy 21,18-21: Reviewing the Case of the Rebellious Son", *JSOT* 13 (1979) 13-31, hier 18-26, zeigt, dass die Worte בן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵד «ein störrischer und widerspenstiger Sohn» häufig für das Volk Israel und seine Beziehung zu YHWH verwendet werden (vgl. Ps 78,8.17.40.56; Num 20,10; Dtn 31,27 u.v.m.). Diese Textstellen treten in eine intertextuelle Wechselwirkung mit Dtn 21,18-21, doch YHWH bringt seinem störrischen Volk nicht die Todesstrafe, sondern gewährt ihm eine Erneuerung des Bundesverhältnisses.

<sup>(43)</sup> Ob die Steinigung als "geläufigste Hinrichtungsart" stets bei den *mot-*Sätzen gemeint ist, wie es z.B. BÜCHLER, "Todesstrafen", 665, und BOECKER,

formuliert werden muss, der so aussieht: “Der Gesetzgeber wollte das Todesrecht für den Halter [des stößigen Rindes] anerkannt, aber nicht angewandt wissen und verband so die Konsequenz seines Rechtsdenkens mit dem Gewohnheitsrecht”<sup>(46)</sup>. Eben dieses Gewohnheitsrecht sieht aber eine angemessene Ausgleichszahlung vor.

## II. Intermezzo

(1) Aus dieser Übersicht wird deutlich, dass die teils mit, teils ohne *mot*-Satz formulierten Todesrechtsbestimmungen sehr disparat und verstreut erscheinen. So steht etwa die Todesbestimmung für Menschenraub in Dtn 24,6 zwischen der Befreiung Neuvermählter vom Kriegsdienst und dem Verbot, die Handmühle als Pfand zu nehmen, einerseits und Aussagen über die Krankheit des Aussatzes andererseits. Die Anordnung, dass Väter nicht für ihre Söhne und Söhne nicht für ihre Väter «sterben» sollen, eine Sippenhaftung also ausgeschlossen werden soll (Dtn 24,16; zitiert in 2 Kön 14,6), findet sich zwischen der Lohnauszahlung an den Tagelöhner und Bestimmungen für sozial Schwache (u.a. Verbot der Nachlese).

Zwar gibt es Ansätze zur Reihenbildung von *mot*-Sätzen in Ex 21 und Lev 20, doch fehlen dann wiederum in diesen Kontexten Bestimmungen zur Durchführung eines Prozesses und der Hinrichtung<sup>(47)</sup>. Somit liegt die Frage nahe, ob die genannten biblischen Texte in ihren jetzigen Kontexten als ausführbares Recht für eine konkrete Praxis zu verstehen sind<sup>(48)</sup>.

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*Redeformen*, 148, annehmen, erscheint fraglich: Warum ist dann bei bestimmten Tatbeständen die Steinigung erwähnt (“an sich überflüssige[r] Zusatz”, “eine Art Ausführungsbestimmung”, so Boecker), bei den meisten anderen jedoch nicht?

<sup>(44)</sup> Die Talionsformulierung “Leben für Leben” in Ex 21,23 bedeutet nicht die Todessanktion, vgl. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 79-128.

<sup>(45)</sup> Da Num 35,31 für zum Tod Verurteilte ein “Sühnegeld” ausschließt (s.o.), könnte die Regelung in Ex 21,30, die eine finanzielle Ausgleichszahlung ermöglicht, ein Hinweis darauf sein, dass der Tatbestand der nachlässigen Haltung eines Rindes, das jemanden tötet, nicht in den Bereich der Kapitaldelikte gehört.

<sup>(46)</sup> SEEBASS, “Sklavenrecht”, 181-182.

<sup>(47)</sup> Vgl. SCHÜNGEL-STRAUMANN, *Tod und Leben*, 124: מוֹת יוֹמָה und מוֹת יוֹמָה stehen immer absolut, d.h. “es wird nie gesagt, wer diese Strafe vollzieht”. Alle Vergehen, auf die מוֹת יוֹמָה als Strafe steht, kommen im Pentateuch auch in Formulierungen ohne Todessanktion vor.

<sup>(48)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus*, 269; ID., “Divine Threats”, 44-45.

(2) Auf der Suche nach möglichen Ausführungsbestimmungen stößt man auf die Grundsatzregelung von Dtn 19,15, dass für eine Entscheidung bei jeglichem Vergehen mindestens zwei oder drei Zeugen aussagen müssen. Da mitunter der Ankläger auch als Zeuge gelten kann, ist somit mindestens eine weitere Person, die das Vergehen bezeugt, heranzuziehen. Diese Bestimmung wird im Blick auf das Todesrecht eigens eingeschränkt: Num 35,30 betont für den Fall des Totschlags, dass der Täter nicht getötet werden darf, wenn nur eine einzige Zeugenaussage vorliegt. Dtn 17,6 steht im Kontext der Bestimmungen für den Abfall von Gott und die Verehrung von Gestrirngöttern und verallgemeinert den Grundsatz: «Wenn es um Leben oder Tod eines Angeklagten geht, darf er nur auf die Aussage von zwei oder drei Zeugen hin zum Tod verurteilt werden. Auf die Aussage eines einzigen Zeugen hin darf er nicht zum Tod verurteilt werden».

Dieses Prinzip dürfte die möglichen Fälle stark reduzieren, wenn man bedenkt, welche der genannten Tatbestände derart öffentlich stattfinden, dass mindestens zwei oder drei Augenzeugen für einen Todesrechtsprozess zur Verfügung stehen<sup>(49)</sup>. Ein direkter Widerspruch ergibt sich zu Dtn 22,25-27: Bei einer Vergewaltigung «auf freiem Feld» soll nur der Vergewaltiger sterben, nicht aber die Vergewaltigte, da sie vergeblich um Hilfe geschrien haben könnte. Wenn eine solche Situation eines «zeugenfreien Raums» («freies Feld») unterstellt wird, ist zu fragen, woher hier noch Zeugen kommen sollen, wie also ein Todesrechtsprozess gegen den Vergewaltiger erfolgen kann.

(3) Weiter werden die Zweifel an einem Todesstrafrecht im Alten Testament dadurch genährt, dass nicht klar ist, wer genau zu Gericht sitzt sowie wer die Hinrichtung wie ausführt. Dtn 17,7 nimmt im Falle einer Steinigung die Zeugen als Erste in die Pflicht (vgl. Dtn 13,10), dann erst «das ganze Volk»<sup>(50)</sup>. Aus dieser idealistischen Sicht wird deutlich, dass keine eigenen Gerichte und Institutionen für ein Todesstrafrecht vorgesehen sind. Dtn 21,18-21 (der widerspenstige Sohn) erwähnt als Gerichtsinstanz «die Ältesten der Stadt und die Torversammlung des Ortes», als Hinrichtende «alle Männer der Stadt»

<sup>(49)</sup> Vgl. G. STASSEN, "Biblical Teaching on Capital Punishment", *RevExp* 93 (1996) 485-496, hier: 486-487; SEEBASS, "Sklavenrecht", 184.

<sup>(50)</sup> «Das ganze Volk» oder «die Gemeinde» (עֵדָה) sind idealtypische Größen auf literarischer Ebene, keine konkreten Gerichtsinstanzen. Vgl. u.a. MERZ, *Blutrache*, 134-135.

(Steinigung). Das Ziel des Abschnittes ist aber nicht die Einrichtung eines Todesstrafgerichts, sondern: «Ganz Israel soll davon (von der Hinrichtung oder auch von dieser Anordnung!) hören, damit sie sich fürchten». Die Gemeindepäränese steht im Vordergrund. In der anschließenden Bestimmung über die Bestattung der Leichname von Hingerichteten (Dtn 21,22-23) ist auch keine Institution genannt, sondern in paränetischem Ton ein "Du" angesprochen. Wer aber genau soll damit betraut sein, den Toten an den Pfahl zu hängen<sup>(51)</sup> und ihn am selben Tag wieder abzunehmen und zu bestatten? Auch diese Vorschrift hat letztlich mit der Realität wenig zu tun<sup>(52)</sup>.

(4) Ein solches Strafrecht passt auch nicht zu den Rechtsinstitutionen, die der Text des Alten Testaments voraussetzt<sup>(53)</sup>. Drei solche Institutionen lassen sich erkennen: (a) die Versammlung der Vollbürger im Tordurchgang einer Stadt (vgl. Rut 4,1-2); (b) Familie und Schule, die Normen lehren (Sprichwörter; Prohibitive); (c) die Tempelpriesterschaft mit Weisungen für den Kult und für Gottesurteile (Ordal; vgl. z.B. Num 5,11-31). Radikale Todesstrafen würden der Familiengemeinschaft kaum weiterhelfen. Auch die Versammlung der Bürger im Tor ist auf Schlichtung und Schadensausgleich bedacht

<sup>(51)</sup> Das Aufhängen war nicht die Hinrichtungsart, sondern eine Zurschaustellung der Leiche, um den Hingerichteten zu demütigen und andere abzuschrecken. Die Praxis ist mehr in Kriegsfällen (Jos 8,29; 10,26) als in Kriminalfällen belegt. Die Verhinderung einer ordentlichen Bestattung soll den Delinquenten über den Tod hinaus bestrafen. Derartige untersagt die Vorschrift von Dtn 21,22-23, die auch die Verbreitung der Unreinheit verursachenden Leichenteile verhindern will. Vgl. TIGAY, *Deuteronomy*, 198. Zur Todesstrafe "ans Holz hängen" für den "Verrat am Volk" in der Tempelrolle von Qumran (11Q19 Kol. 64,7-13) vgl. J. MAIER, *Die Tempelrolle vom Toten Meer und das "Neue Jerusalem"* (UTB 829; München – Basel 31997), 276-282. Vgl. ferner M.J. MULDER, "תָּלָה/תָּלָה", *TWAT* VIII, 658.

<sup>(52)</sup> Selbst wenn Dtn 21,22-23 eine konkrete Hinrichtung voraussetzte, bliebe es ein Rätsel, warum eine Bestimmung über die Behandlung des Leichnams eines Hingerichteten nach Exekution und Pfählung aufgenommen wird, während konkrete Bestimmungen über die Hinrichtung selbst und über Grund sowie Art und Weise der Pfählung fehlen. Dem Text geht es hier nicht primär um eine "Todesstrafe", sondern um die Vermeidung einer Verunreinigung des Landes. Wenn aber schon ein Hingerichteter (ein von Gott Verfluchter!) noch am gleichen Tag bestattet werden soll – um wie viel mehr besteht die Pflicht, einen "normal" Verstorbenen zu begraben! Sollte die paränetische Pragmatik von Dtn 21,22-23 in diese Richtung gehen?

<sup>(53)</sup> Vgl. u.a. H. NIEHR, *Rechtsprechung in Israel*. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Gerichtsorganisation im Alten Testament (SBS 130; Stuttgart 1987).

sowie an kultischen Vergehen nicht interessiert<sup>(54)</sup>. Die Priester wiederum sind für die außerhalb des sakralen Raumes begangenen Taten wie Totschlag und Inzest kaum zuständig. Woher kommen also die tödlichen Warnungen? Die Versuche (v.a. von H. Schulz), eine kultische Gerichtsinstanz und ein todesgerichtliches Verfahren zu rekonstruieren, müssen aufgrund der zu geringen Textgrundlage als gescheitert betrachtet werden<sup>(55)</sup>.

Wenn das Todesstrafrecht im Alten Testament sehr klar geregelt wäre und demzufolge viele solcher Prozesse und anschließende Hinrichtungen stattgefunden haben, müsste es Spuren davon geben.

### III. Todesrechtsprozesse und Hinrichtungen im Alten Testament

In der erzählenden Literatur des Alten Testaments, besonders im Buch Genesis, gibt es eine ganze Reihe von Fällen, die unter die genannten "Todesrechtssätze" fallen würden. Das beginnt bei Kain, der Abel tötet, geht weiter über Abraham, der seine Halbschwester Sara ehelicht (Gen 20,12) und hört noch nicht auf bei Juda, der (unbekannterweise) mit seiner Schwiegertochter Tamar Zwillinge zeugt (Gen 38). In all diesen Fällen ist jedoch von einem Todesrechtsprozess keine Rede<sup>(56)</sup>.

(1) Erst in Lev 24,10-23<sup>(57)</sup> taucht so etwas wie eine "Todesstrafe" auf: Einem Halb-Israeliten («Der Sohn einer Israelitin und eines Ägypters») wird der Prozess gemacht, weil er den Namen Gottes

<sup>(54)</sup> SEEBASS, "Sklavenrecht", 182, beobachtet "eine erstaunliche Diskrepanz zwischen der Härte des Todesrechts und der Milde des Rechtsausgleichs, sobald das Todesrecht nicht in Frage kam." Und weiter führt er an, dass "das atl. Hebräisch kein Wort für Strafe hat". Oberstes Ziel des biblischen Rechtssystems ist es, einen gerechten Ausgleich, Schadensbegrenzung und Schadensersatz zu erzielen, und nicht drakonische Strafen auszusprechen, die niemandem nützten. Vgl. die Darstellung bei SEEBASS, "Sklavenrecht", 183, dass das Alte Testament außerhalb des "Todesrechts" nur drei echte Strafen kenne (Dtn 25,11-12; 25,2-3; 19,16-21) und auch die mehrfach erwähnte doppelte Ersatzleistung (z.B. Ex 22,3.6) keine Strafe, sondern eine Satisfaktionsleistung oder Abstandszahlung ist. Vgl. ferner GERSTENBERGER, "Divine Threats", 46.

<sup>(55)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, "Apodiktisches Recht?", 17.

<sup>(56)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, "Apodiktisches Recht?", 18; ferner STASSEN, "Capital Punishment", 486, zu Kain, Mose, David, Tamar in Gen 38, Hosea und Gomer.

<sup>(57)</sup> Vgl. R.R. HUTTON, "Narrative in Leviticus: The Case of the Blaspheming Son (Lev 24,10-23)", *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 3 (1997) 145-163.



schmähte. Die Perikope steht mit ihrem vom Umfeld völlig abweichenden Erzählstil eigenartig im Kontext<sup>(58)</sup> zwischen den Vorschriften über den Schaubrottisch (24,1-9) und den Bestimmungen zu Sabbatjahr und Jubeljahr (25,1-55). Zunächst sieht es so aus, als handle es sich um die Erzählung eines tatsächlichen Ereignisses, u.a. werden Namen von Personen genannt. Dann aber gibt es keinen Prozess aufgrund eines *mot*-Satzes, vielmehr wird ein Spruch YHWHs abgewartet. *Gott* spricht das Urteil in Form eines *mot*-Satzes, der dann weitere Rechtssätze, die mit der ursprünglichen Geschichte nichts zu tun haben, nach sich zieht. Nur sehr knapp wird die Steinigung des Schmähers in 24,23 nachgetragen. Im Zentrum steht weniger die Hinrichtung, sondern die Belehrung des Volkes («sag den Israeliten»). Das Ganze wirkt weniger wie ein Bericht über die Ausführung der Todesstrafe, sondern wie ein aus paränetischen Gründen apophtegmatisch um einen bestimmten Rechtssatz über die Schmähung des Gottesnamens konstruierter Fall<sup>(59)</sup>. Beachtet man genauer die Stellung der Perikope im Buch Levitikus, so wird deutlich, dass es sich um einen weit über den Einzelfall der “Blasphemie” hinausgehenden Präzedenzfall handelt, der das paränetische Ziel hat, die Gültigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit aller vorausgehenden Vorschriften einzuschärfen<sup>(60)</sup>.

(2) Ebenso wenig realistisch wie vielmehr paradigmatisch und paränetisch erscheint die Geschichte vom Sabbatschänder in Num 15,32-36. Zunächst behandelt Num 15 Vorschriften für Sühnopfer und Abgaben, insbesondere bei *versehentlichen* Verstößen gegen die Gebote. Das *vorsätzliche* Begehen einer Verfehlung wird heftig verurteilt: «ein solcher Mensch muss ausgemerzt werden». Offensichtlich soll die folgende Geschichte die Vorsätzlichkeit illustrieren: Mit dem Satz «als die Israeliten in der Wüste waren» wird deutlich, dass aus viel späterer Perspektive formuliert und auf die Wüstenzeit als paradigmatische Epoche zurückgeblickt wird. Der Beispielsfall ist das Holzsammeln am Sabbat. Wieder wird nicht sofort das Todesurteil gesprochen (trotz des *mot*-Satzes von Ex 31,15), sondern Gott selbst verkündet den Tötungsbefehl, der auch ausgeführt wird. Als wäre nichts Besonderes geschehen, fährt Mose mit seinen Instruktionen

<sup>(58)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus*, 329. RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 328, scheidet den narrativen Rahmen literarkritisch aus.

<sup>(59)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus*, 333; ID., “Divine Threats”, 47; auch SCHULZ, *Todesrecht*, 94.

<sup>(60)</sup> Vgl. HUTTON, “Narrative”, 162-163.

hinsichtlich der Quasten an den Kleidern fort — dann aber wird deutlich, worum es wirklich geht: Die Quasten sollen an die Gebote Gottes erinnern und daran, dass das Volk sie mit seinem Herzen einhalten will. Num 15 schließt mit dieser Belehrung, die damit den eigentlichen Zielpunkt des Kapitels angibt.

(3) Auch Moses Nachfolger Josua statuiert ein Exempel (Jos 7): Achan hat sich unrechtmäßigweise etwas von einer Kriegsbeute angeeignet, die aufgrund eines religiösen Gelübdes vernichtet werden sollte (Vernichtungsweihe). Er wird aber nicht mittels einer Untersuchung und eines Rechtssatzes überführt, sondern durch ein Gottesurteil (von Gott gelenkter Losentscheid). Die Hinrichtung Achans erfolgt durch «ganz Israel». Die berichteten Einzelheiten erlauben dabei nicht die Rekonstruktion eines Todesrechtsprozesses und einer Todesstrafe, ein Rechtssatz ist nicht genannt. Die Botschaft der Geschichte ist eine andere: Achan hat sich an der Gemeinschaft vergangen, denn durch seine Tat lag der Zorn Gottes auf dem gesamten Volk, das so militärisch in eine Zwangslage geriet. Das ganze Volk wiederum trug durch die Steinigung zur Sühnung der Verfehlung bei, Achan selbst rückt in die Nähe des Sündenbocks, dessen Tod für die Gemeinschaft Heil bedeutet<sup>(61)</sup>.

(4) Ein “richtiger” Todesrechtsprozess ohne Beteiligung Gottes findet sich dagegen in 1 Kön 21<sup>(62)</sup>. Weil Nabot seinen Weinberg nicht an König Ahab verkaufen will, strengt Ahabs Frau Isebel einen Schauprozess gegen Nabot an: Ein Fasten wird ausgerufen, um die Dringlichkeit des anstehenden Problems anzuzeigen — so sind alle Anwesenden darauf eingestellt, dass eine erhebliche Krise ansteht<sup>(63)</sup>.

<sup>(61)</sup> Eine strukturelle Parallele findet sich in Num 25,1-18 (die Eifertat des Pinhas). Betont man gerade diesen Aspekt an den beiden Geschichten (Num 25 und Jos 7), nämlich dass die Tötung eines Schuldigen eine Sühne bewirkt, wird deutlich, dass es hier nicht um eine “Todesstrafe” geht.

<sup>(62)</sup> Vgl. W. THIEL, “Der Todesrechtsprozeß Nabots in 1 Kön 21”, *Recht und Ethos im Alten Testament – Gestalt und Wirkung*. Festschrift H. Seebass (Hrsg. S. BEYERLE – G. MAYER – H. STRAUSS) (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999) 73-81 (Lit.!). Thiel betont zwar, dass 1 Kön 21 Ergebnis einer literarischen Gestaltung ist (76), nimmt aber doch einen historischen Quellenwert an (Datierung von 21,1-20\* in das 8.Jh. vC) und betont, dass 1 Kön 21 ein Beleg für “die Existenz der Todesrechtsinstitution” sei (80). Aber schon für einen nötigen zugrundeliegenden *mot*-Satz (“Todesrechtssatz”), den es in der Formulierung, wie sie 1 Kön 21,10.13 erfordern würde, nicht gibt, muss Thiel eine “Zusammenschau von Ex 22,27 und Lev 24,16” annehmen. Es erscheint aber m.E. nicht “unzweifelhaft”, dass es für die Geschichte von 1 Kön 21 einen solchen Todesrechtssatz gegeben haben muss.

<sup>(63)</sup> Vgl. THIEL, “Todesrechtsprozeß”, 77.

Das Fasten ist allgemeines Anzeichen für eine nationale Krise und keineswegs spezifisches Element eines "Todesrechtsprozesses". In dieser spannungsgeladenen Situation wird Nabot von zwei (!) falschen Zeugen beschuldigt, gegen den König und gegen Gott gelästert zu haben (vgl. Lev 24,16; Ex 22,27). Nabot wird tatsächlich verurteilt und durch Steinigung hingerichtet, woraufhin Ahab Nabots Weinberg in Besitz nimmt. Für das Verstehen der Geschichte ist es keineswegs nötig, eine feste Form eines "Todesrechtsprozesses" (die wiederum nur aus dem Text rekonstruiert würde) vorauszusetzen. Es genügt völlig anzunehmen, dass einem König in einer durch das Fasten angezeigten nationalen Krise (aber letztlich auch sonst) jede denkbare Maßnahme möglich ist<sup>(64)</sup>. Dieser "Justizmord" hat für Ahabs Haus schlimme Folgen, die der Prophet Elija ankündigt<sup>(65)</sup>. Da es das eigentliche Ziel von 1 Kön 21 ist, diesen Justizmord zu Lasten von König Ahab und seiner Frau Isebel zu schildern, ihn also letztlich als illegal zu verurteilen, ist der Text als Quelle für ein Todesstrafrecht denkbar ungeeignet: Je fadenscheiniger der Prozessverlauf dargestellt wird, umso mehr kommt das der Pragmatik der Stelle — Ahab und Isebel zu disqualifizieren — entgegen, und umso weniger lassen sich daraus Fakten für einen Todesrechtsprozess in der Königszeit gewinnen.

(5) Auch gegen den Propheten Jeremia wird ein "Todesrechtsprozess" angestrengt (Jer 26,7-19), doch er wird freigesprochen. Allerdings fehlt hier ein Rechtssatz, gegen den Jeremia verstoßen haben sollte. In manchen Prophetenworten könnte ferner ein Reflex auf einen "Todesrechtsprozess" zu finden sein: In Jer 7,1-15 stellt sich Jeremia an die Tempeltore, die der traditionelle Gerichtsort sind (vgl. Jer 26,10) und verkündet, dass Gott das sündige Volk verwerfen

<sup>(64)</sup> Dazu gehört auch die Beseitigung unbequemer Leute in scheinbar legalen Vorgängen, vgl. 1 Kön 2,29-34; Jer 26,23; 2 Chr 24,21; ferner 1 Sam 22,16. Dabei darf die faktische Macht, jemanden töten zu lassen, nicht mit "Todesstrafe" bezeichnet werden. — Die Hinrichtung der Nachkommen Sauls durch die Gibeoniter in 2 Sam 21,1-14 ist keine "Todesstrafe", sondern ein dunkles Kapitel um Blutschuld und Blutrache, vgl. G. HENTSCHEL, "Die Hinrichtung der Nachkommen Sauls (2 Sam 21,1-14)", *Nachdenken über Israel, Bibel und Theologie*. Festschrift K.-D. Schunck (Hrsg. H.M. NIEMANN – M. AUGUSTIN – W.H. SCHMIDT) (BEATAJ 37; Frankfurt am Main u.a. 1994) 93-116; ferner McKEATING, "Law on Homicide", 59-62.

<sup>(65)</sup> Wie der Prophet Natan nach der Affäre Davids mit Batseba (2 Sam 12,5) zeigt auch Elija dem König das Verwerfliche seiner Tat auf, für die er den Tod verdient hätte. Doch die Texte sind weit davon entfernt, eine Todesstrafe für den König auch nur zu erwägen.

werde, gleichsam eine Art Todesurteil Gottes über Volk und Tempel. In Ez 16,38-40 findet sich ein Gerichtswort gegen Jerusalem, das mit der Metapher der treulosen Ehefrau versehen wird: Nach den Vorschriften für Ehebrecherinnen (Lev 20,10) wird Gott das Urteil fällen, es wird eine Volksversammlung und eine Steinigung geben (vgl. ebenso Ez 23,1-49: die Parabel der treulosen Schwestern Ohola/Samaria und Oholiba/Jerusalem). Diese Spuren sind jedoch zu vage, um daraus eine konkrete Rechtskultur oder gar eine "Strafprozessordnung" zu rekonstruieren. Sie sind jedenfalls keine Beweise dafür, dass und wie die Todesstrafe ausgeübt wurde<sup>(66)</sup>.

Bilanziert man die wenigen Belege für angebliche "Todesrechtsprozesse" im Alten Testament, so stößt man auf paradigmatische Lehrerzählungen mit paränetischem Charakter, auf einen handfesten Justizmord und auf mehrdeutige Prophetenworte. Der Befund steht in keinem Verhältnis zur Zahl der mit der angeblichen Todesstrafe belegten Tatbestände. Es scheint einen deutlichen Widerspruch zu geben zwischen den harten Formulierungen der Rechtssätze in den biblischen Texten und der tatsächlichen Praxis, für die sich kaum konkrete Hinweise finden<sup>(67)</sup>.

#### IV. Schlussfolgerungen

(1) Die hier in Betracht gezogenen biblischen Texte erlauben keinen konkreten Rückschluss auf eine tatsächliche Rechtspraxis

<sup>(66)</sup> Vgl. McKEATING, "Adultery", 62. Insgesamt schließt McKEATING hinsichtlich der Vorschriften über den Ehebruch, dass das kasuistische Recht zwar die Todesstrafe vorsehe und dass es viele Hinweise dafür gebe, dass diese Vorschrift bekannt war, jedoch nur sehr wenig direkte Evidenz dafür, dass sie tatsächlich angewandt wurde.

<sup>(67)</sup> McKEATING, "Law on Homicide", 67, wendet sich gegen die These von A. PHILLIPS, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law. A New Approach to the Decalogue* (Oxford 1970); vgl. ID., "The Decalogue – Ancient Israel's Criminal Law", *JJS* 34 (1983) 1-20, der Dekalog sei ein listenartiges Strafrecht, das durch die Todesstrafe sanktioniert sei. Wenn es tatsächlich (auf der Basis eines sehr früh angesetzten Dekalogs) ein über Jahrhunderte funktionierendes (Todes-)Strafrechtssystem gegeben hätte (wie A. Phillips das annimmt), dann wäre es unerklärbar, dass in all der Zeit nie ein Fall aufgetreten ist, der interessant genug gewesen wäre, um Eingang in die erzählenden Texte zu finden. Zudem ist mit McKEATING, "Law on Homicide", 68, zu betonen, dass in der nachexilischen Zeit Israel in hohem Maße von fremder Oberhoheit abhängig war, so dass schwerwiegende Tatbestände wie Mord nicht nach "biblischem Recht", sondern nach dem Gesetz der jeweiligen Besatzungsmacht behandelt wurden.

hinsichtlich der Todesstrafe zu irgendeiner Zeit<sup>(68)</sup>. Es kann nicht rekonstruiert werden, wie eine solche Kapitalstrafe beschlossen und ausgeführt wurde<sup>(69)</sup>. Sicher hat es Hinrichtungen gegeben<sup>(70)</sup>, außerdem gibt es Hinweise auf Lynchjustiz und eine mitunter unkontrollierbare Blutrache. Manche so genannten Todesrechtsbestimmungen und insbesondere die Vorschriften zum Asyl versuchen, die Blutrache zu kanalisieren (Num 35, Dtn 19,1-13). Spuren einer ausgeprägten Todesgerichtsbarkeit mit einer präzisen Strafprozessordnung sind jedoch nicht zu finden<sup>(71)</sup>.

(2) Für keinen der Tatbestände, die mit einer Todessanktion belegt sind, gibt es einen Fall in der erzählenden Literatur, wo ein diesbezüglicher Todesrechtsprozess und eine Hinrichtung berichtet werden. Im Gegenteil, gelegentlich kommen Verstöße gegen das so genannte Todesrecht vor, ohne dass die entsprechende Konsequenz eintritt<sup>(72)</sup>. Texte, die von einer angeblichen Praxis handeln, erweisen

<sup>(68)</sup> Zur Problematik des Verhältnisses von "Recht und Realität" vgl. grundsätzlich u.a. CRÜSEMAN, *Tora*, 22. Das Problem sei im Alten Testament besonders virulent, "wo für viele Rechtssätze jegliche Kontrollquellen fehlen, an denen dann der Realitätsbezug festzumachen wäre". Vgl. ferner M.J. BUSS, "The Distinction between Civil and Criminal Law in Ancient Israel", *Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem 1977) I, 51-62; LEMAIRE, "Système pénal", 119; MCKEATING, "Adultery", 66. — U. SICK, *Die Tötung eines Menschen und ihre Ahndung in den keilschriftlichen Rechtssammlungen unter Berücksichtigung rechtsvergleichender Aspekte*, (Tübingen 1984) II, 312, arbeitet heraus, dass "man – streng genommen – auch nur von einer Vorstufe zu einem staatlichen öffentlichen Strafrecht sprechen könnte".

<sup>(69)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus*, 277; GABRIEL, "Todesstrafe", 75-77.

<sup>(70)</sup> LANG, "Todesstrafe", 890, führt Esra 7,25-26 und Jos. *Ant* XI, 130 als Hinweise auf die Verhängung der Todesstrafe durch Richter in persischem Auftrag an. Inwieweit die Blutrache in nachexilischer Zeit praktiziert wurde, muss nach RUWE, "Zusammenwirken", 191, offen bleiben. Da Philo und die Mischna Belege für Asylstädte und den Bluträcher aufweisen, muss nach Ruwe das Selbsthilfemoment der "Blutrache" ein "bleibendes Element des Todesrechts des biblischen Israel angesehen werden". Ruwe erwähnt auch die Kritik Philos an der Blutrache (*De spec. leg.* III, 129).

<sup>(71)</sup> Die außerbiblische altorientalische Rechtslandschaft kann hier nicht umfassend herangezogen werden. Hingewiesen sei lediglich auf die Beobachtung von J. VANDEN DRIESSCHE, "La peine de mort et les châtiments corporels dans le Code d'Hammurabi", *Akkadica* 19 (1980) 1-37.35, die hinsichtlich des Codex Hammurapi feststellt, dass die Todesstrafe vermutlich nicht häufig ausgeführt wurde.

<sup>(72)</sup> Für die Bestimmungen zum sexuellen Bereich in Lev 20 z.B. betont CRÜSEMAN, *Tora*, 304, dass es im Judentum "faktisch zur Nichtpraktizierung solch rigider Gesetze" gekommen ist. "Bereits in biblischer Zeit ist von einer Praktizierung nichts überliefert."

sich als Lehrerzählungen. In ihnen spricht immer Gott selbst das Urteil. Im Alten Testament wird nie jemand allein aufgrund eines *mot*-Satzes exekutiert.

(3) Der beobachtete Widerspruch zwischen den harten Bestimmungen in den *mot*-Sätzen einerseits und den fehlenden rechtspraktischen Ausführungsanweisungen andererseits sowie den kaum vorhandenen Spuren für eine praktische Durchführung könnte dahin aufgelöst werden, dass sich zwei ethische Prinzipien gegenüberstehen<sup>(73)</sup>: Zum einen geht es um den unbedingten Gehorsam gegenüber Gottes Gebot und die schwerwiegenden Folgen eines Verstoßes dagegen — zum anderen geht es um den hohen Wert und die Unverletzlichkeit des Lebens des Menschen, der als Abbild Gottes geschaffen ist und für dessen Blut Gott selbst Rechenschaft fordert (Gen 9,5-6). Die Verbindung beider Prinzipien zwingt dazu, Alternativen zur Todesstrafe zu entwickeln<sup>(74)</sup>.

(4) Die Vorschrift, für einen Kapitalprozess mindestens zwei oder drei Zeugen aufzubieten, um die Todesstrafe verhängen zu können (Num 35,30; Dtn 17,6), lassen eine Reihe von Tatbeständen von vorne herein als ungeeignet für einen solchen Prozess erscheinen, da sie in der Regel nicht öffentlich verübt werden und daher die nötigen Zeugen nicht zur Verfügung stehen (z.B. der sexuelle Verkehr mit einem Tier<sup>(75)</sup>; der Ehebruch<sup>(76)</sup>; homosexueller Verkehr).

<sup>(73)</sup> Vgl. zum Folgenden STASSEN, "Capital Punishment", 487, 492.

<sup>(74)</sup> Die Fortsetzung dieser Linie findet sich in der rabbinisch-jüdischen Tradition: Zwar steht die Gültigkeit der biblischen *mot*-Sätze außer Frage, doch tendiert die Behandlung des Themas durch die Rabbinen dahin, die Todesstrafe nach Möglichkeit zu vermeiden (vgl. mMak 1,10); vgl. C. THOMA, "Todesstrafe und Folter in der jüdischen Tradition", *Concilium* 14 (1978) 672-677 (hier: 673). MILGROM, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1732-1733, sieht die rabbinische Diskussion um die Steinigung als "purely academic" an. Schon 40 Jahre vor der Zerstörung des zweiten Tempels hatte der Sanhedrin kein Recht, Kapitalstrafen zu verhängen (bSan 41a; ySan 1:18a). Vgl. auch H.H. COHN – L.I. RABINOWITZ, "Capital Punishment", *EncJud* (1972); CD-Edition 1997.

<sup>(75)</sup> Vgl. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 325.

<sup>(76)</sup> In Num 5,11-31 wird mit dem "Eifersuchtsordal" der Fall eines nicht *in flagranti* entdeckten Ehebruchs durch die Ehefrau behandelt. Da keine Augenzeugen vorhanden sind, gehört der *im Nachhinein* aufgedeckte Ehebruch nicht zur Todesgerichtsbarkeit. Insofern besteht zwischen Num 5,11-31 und Lev 20,10 kein Widerspruch. Vgl. MILGROM, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1748. Auch Dtn 22,22 regelt faktisch nur den durch Zeugenbeweis aufgeklärten Ehebruch, "der, wie es in der Natur der Sache liegt, eher ein theoretischer ist." Vgl. E. OTTO, *Gottes Recht als Menschenrecht*. Rechts- und literaturhistorische Studien zum Deuteronomium (BZAR 2; Wiesbaden 2002) 261. Im Falle des Ehebruchs hatte

(5) Gerade auch die Zusammenstellung der sanktionierten Tatbestände lassen Zweifel an der Praktikabilität eines derartigen "Todesrechts" aufkommen. Es ist nicht einzusehen, dass gerade *diese* Vergehen derart massiv unter "Strafe" gestellt werden, während eine Reihe anderer Taten, die z.T. im unmittelbaren Kontext genannt werden, andere Konsequenzen nach sich ziehen, die nicht immer juristische "Rechtsfolgen" sind. Die Frage der Angemessenheit wird weder gestellt noch diskutiert. Ein auffälliger Aspekt ist in diesem Zusammenhang, dass im Heiligkeitgesetz nicht alle Prohibitive von Lev 18 in Lev 20 sanktioniert werden<sup>(77)</sup>. Es fehlen folgende Verbote: der Sexualverkehr mit der leiblichen Mutter (18,7), der Enkelinnen-Inzest (18,10), der Stiefschwestern-Inzest (18,11) sowie die Polygynie mit einer Frau und deren Schwester zugleich (18,18). Diese Tatbestände werden mit keiner Sanktion versehen<sup>(78)</sup>. Dieses Fehlen stellt die Annahme eines umfassenden "Todesrechts" im strafrechtlich-juristischen Sinne, das so in der Praxis durchgeführt wurde, wie es in den Texten steht, sehr in Frage. Insgesamt ist zu den Bestimmungen von Lev 20 Folgendes festzuhalten: "Der Hintergrund, auf dem hier geredet wird, sind eindeutig die dem Heiligkeitgesetz zugrundeliegenden Vorstellungen von heilig und profan, rein und unrein, wodurch zugleich eine unmittelbare und direkte Umsetzung in gerichtswirksame Praxis ausgeschlossen ist"<sup>(79)</sup>.

(6) Ein weiteres Hindernis für die praktische Durchführung gerade der *mot*-Sätze ist deren deklarative Formulierung. Sie verknüpfen Tatbestände mit der Todessphäre, aber sie verzichten durch diese knappe und gedrängte Form auf jegliche Details und Konkretionen

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der Ehemann ein Dispositionsrecht (in der Bibel wie in der Keilschriftliteratur) und konnte die Scheidung aussprechen (vgl. z.B. Jer 3,1-11). — Auch in der Weisheitsliteratur wird Ehebruch stark geächtet, aber nicht mit der Todesstrafe versehen: In Spr 6,27-35 ist von Schlägen und Schande die Rede, und es wird vorausgesetzt, dass eine finanzielle Ausgleichszahlung üblich war, vgl. LEMAIRE, "Système pénal", 119; H. McKEATING, "Adultery", 58-59.

<sup>(77)</sup> Den literarischen Bezug von Lev 20,2aß-27 auf Lev 18,2b-30 (und 19,2a-37) weist RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 225-226, plausibel nach.

<sup>(78)</sup> Die Erklärungen von RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 226, befriedigen nicht: Warum soll Lev 18,7 (Mutter) "nur die Funktion einer Prinzipienformulierung" haben? Müsste nicht gerade eine solche "Ungeheuerlichkeit" unter der "Todesstrafe" stehen? Und warum sollten die anderen Inzest- und Polygynie-Tatbestände, nur weil sie "offenbar häufiger" vorkommen, "nicht strafrechtlich reglementiert, sondern lediglich verboten werden"? Mit einer für ein Kapitalstrafrecht unumgänglichen "Rechtssicherheit" hat das nichts zu tun.

<sup>(79)</sup> CRÜSEMANN, *Tora*, 303-304.

hinsichtlich der Ausführung. Es besteht offensichtlich kein Interesse an einer systematischen "Todesstraßprozessordnung". Zudem erscheint die Formulierung mit dem Infinitivus absolutus als Verstärkung sehr eindringlich: Für eine Rechtsbestimmung ist der rhetorische Aufwand zu hoch, die einfache Wendung «er soll/sie sollen sterben» (vgl. z.B. Dtn 22,22.24.25) würde genügen<sup>(80)</sup>. Gerade die "deklarative" formale Gestalt legt die Spur, wer eigentlich hinter dieser angeblichen "Strafe" steht. Sowohl die feierliche Formulierung als auch die angeführten Sachverhalte deuten darauf hin, dass es um Angelegenheiten geht, die die Kapazität und die Zuständigkeit menschlicher Gerichte übersteigen: Das Schwergewicht liegt auf dem sexuellen Bereich, wo es selten Zeugen gibt, auf der Unantastbarkeit der Person, auf der Autorität der Eltern<sup>(81)</sup>, auf der Ehrfurcht gegenüber Gott, dem Einen, Heiligen — all das sind keine im strengen Sinn justiziablen Fälle, sondern Grundlagen des Glaubens und der sozialen Ordnung einer Gemeinschaft. Sie erfahren daher einen besonderen Schutz durch eine — vermutlich göttliche — Sanktionierung<sup>(82)</sup>. Das Passiv in den *mot*-Sätzen ließe sich auch als *passivum divinum* interpretieren. Folgende biblische Texte weisen ebenfalls in diese Richtung: (a) Die Todesdrohung Gottes in Gen 2,17 wird nicht ausgeführt. Obwohl die Menschen vom Baum der Erkenntnis von Gut und Böse essen, werden sie nicht getötet, vielmehr werden eine Reihe anderer Strafen ausgesprochen, und Gott bewahrt die Menschen sogar durch seine Fürsorge hinsichtlich der Kleidung (3,21). Das zeigt, wie die göttliche Todesdrohung gedacht ist: nicht als gesetzliche Sanktion, die einen Gerichtsprozess erfordern würde, sondern als eine Warnung, die auf die furchtbaren Folgen des Verstoßes gegen das göttliche Gebot aufmerksam macht. Insofern liegt hier ein Paradigma am Anfang der Tora vor, wie ernst die Menschen diese folgende göttliche Weisung (Tora) nehmen sollen. (b) Göttliche Gebote dienen dazu, eine gegebene Ordnung zu schützen und Leben zu ermöglichen — von den ersten Kapiteln des Buches Genesis an ist das ein roter Faden in der

<sup>(80)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, "Apodiktisches Recht?", 18.

<sup>(81)</sup> Bei Ex 21,15.17 handelt es sich um eine Warnung aus weisheitlicher Tradition an die erwachsen gewordenen Kinder, ihre physische und psychische Überlegenheit gegenüber den Eltern nicht zu missbrauchen. "Ein solches Verhalten wird als ein 'todeswürdiges' Verhalten (יָמָה יָמָה) deklariert, was aber nicht im Sinne einer gesetzlichen Ausführung als Todesstrafe verstanden werden muß", so SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, *Bundesbuch*, 220.

<sup>(82)</sup> Vgl. zum Folgenden GERSTENBERGER, "Divine Threats", 46-47.



Tora. Dazu gehört auch die Grenzziehung zwischen "heilig" und "profan" am Berg Sinai in Ex 19,10-24: Der *mot*-Satz in 19,12 ist ganz offensichtlich *kein* menschliches Todesstrafrecht, sondern eine Schutzbestimmung Gottes für die Menschen, die aufgrund ihrer Schwachheit und Sünde nicht in den Bereich des Heiligen eindringen dürfen, da sie sonst vernichtet würden. (c) Unterstützt wird diese Sichtweise durch die Fluchsätze in Dtn 27,15-26, die zahlreiche Tatbestände, die andernorts durch *mot*-Sätze sanktioniert werden, mit einer Fluchformel belegen, die vom Volk mit "Amen" bestätigt wird. Die Ausführung des Fluches wird Gott überlassen. Damit wird deutlich, dass die aus Levitikus und Exodus übernommenen Tatbestände v.a. hinsichtlich sexueller Beziehungen letztlich genauso wie die anderen genannten Tatbestände (z.B. den Grenzstein verrücken, was in der Regel ohne Zeugen geschieht, den Blinden den falschen Weg weisen, das Recht der Armen beugen, einen anderen heimlich, also ohne Zeugen, erschlagen) nicht vor einem menschlichen Gericht justiziabel sind, sondern mit einem Fluch belegt und damit durch göttliche Intervention sanktioniert sind. (d) Auch der *mot*-Satz in Ez 18,13 ist nicht als menschliches Todesstrafrecht zu sehen, sondern als eine unbedingte Ächtung bestimmter Tatbestände, die dadurch geschieht, dass sie einem göttlichen Gericht unterstellt werden. Es lässt sich also für eine ganze Reihe von *mot*-Sätzen und den damit verbundenen Tatbeständen zeigen, dass sie im Lichte anderer biblischer Texte nicht als menschliches Todesstrafrecht zu verstehen sind, sondern als zu ächtende Angelegenheiten, die Gottes direkter Supervision und Intervention unterstehen<sup>(83)</sup>.

(7) Aus all dem liegt der Schluss nahe, dass die *mot*-Sätze und damit letztlich auch die anders formulierten Todessanktionen vornehmlich paradigmatisch-paränetischen Charakter haben<sup>(84)</sup>. Diese Sätze fassen in Worte, was unter keinen Umständen vorkommen darf. Es geht nicht um die Strafe (das zeigen die weitgehend fehlenden Ausführungsbestimmungen und die stereotype Sanktionsformulierung), sondern um den zu verurteilenden, zu ächtenden Tatbestand. Somit ist das sogenannte "Todesrecht" kein Recht im engeren Sinne, sondern ein Ethos. Die *mot*-Sätze gehören also nicht in das Strafrecht, in die "Justiz", sondern sind Drohungen von Gemeindevorstehern, die

<sup>(83)</sup> Vgl. GERSTENBERGER, "Apodictic Law?", 145.

<sup>(84)</sup> Vgl. dazu v.a. GERSTENBERGER, "Apodiktisches Recht?", 17-19. RUWE, *Heiligkeitgesetz*, 227, weist auf den paränetischen Rahmen Lev 20,7-8 und 22-26 hin.

ethische Grundregeln einschärfen wollen. Es geht — trotz der harten Worte — letztlich um Paränese, um Ermahnung und Warnung. Daher ist auch aus dem Alten Testament die Todesstrafe nicht zu begründen.

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#### SUMMARY

Rather than understanding the Old Testament sanction מות יומת ("he shall surely be put to death") as a death penalty edict, one should see it as a parenetic warning. Comparing the verses which contain *mot yumat* with the few references to death sentences and executions, it is to be doubted whether this condemnation was indeed applicable. The 'death edicts' are therefore not 'law,' but divine *dicta* functioning as deterrents. They formulate things that should not happen under any circumstances. Hence, they underscore the most important ethical and cultic maxims.

## ***The Book of Revelation and the First Years of Nero's Reign***

According to ecclesiastical tradition, the *Book of Revelation* was written by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, about the year 95, during his exile in Patmos, shortly before writing the fourth gospel in Ephesus. Most scholars support this late dating (last days of Domitian's reign), but the early dating (between the years 64 and 70) has the support of many important authors<sup>(1)</sup>. In this article I will try to demonstrate that (a) the external evidence is not conclusive in favor of a late dating, because there is an important patristic tradition in favor of Nero's reign; and (b) the internal evidence provides important arguments affirming that the definitive version of *Revelation* was redacted after Nero's ascension to power in the year 54 and before the earthquake of Laodicea in the year 60.

### **I. External Evidence**

Most scholars affirm that the first and most important patristic testimony in favor of a late dating of *Revelation* (at the end of Domitian's reign) is the work of Irenaeus (130-202), *Adv. haeres.* (5.30.3), which was written about 180-190. The original Greek version of this passage was preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.18.3; 5.8.6). But Irenaeus' testimony has been objected to by several authors who argue that there is a grammatical ambiguity which makes room for two possible translations. In the most accepted translation Irenaeus made reference to the time in which the revelation was seen. According to the alternative translation, the text referred to the time in which the apostle was seen alive, which is more logical in consideration of the context. In fact, Irenaeus proposes that it is not necessary to try to decipher the cryptogram 666. Because if John had

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. J.A.T. ROBINSON, *Redating the New Testament* (London 1976), with bibliography (chap. VIII); K.L. GENTRY, *Before Jerusalem Fell. Dating the Book of Revelation. An Exegetical and Historical Argument for a Pre-A.D. 70 Composition* (Tyler, TX 1989), with bibliography (17-18, 24-38); R.B. MOBERLY, "When was Revelation Conceived?", *Bib* 73 (1992) 376-393; J.C. WILSON, "The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation", *NTS* 39 (1993) 587-605; T.B. SLATER, "Dating the Apocalypse to John", *Bib* 84 (2003) 252-258.

wanted to reveal the name, he would have done it, since he still lived at the end of Domitian's reign<sup>(2)</sup>. On the other hand, although Irenaeus has an acknowledged reputation in the patristic tradition, his work is not exempt from inaccuracies due to, mostly, his uncritical acceptance of not so reliable traditions<sup>(3)</sup>. This questionable methodology weakens not only Irenaeus' testimony, written almost a century after the death of Domitian, but the whole testimony of a patristic trend that simply repeated his words. This happens due to the absence of coetaneous and independent testimonies related to Irenaeus to confirm his supposed late dating<sup>(4)</sup>.

But there is another tradition headed by Papias (c. 60-130), who wrote that the brothers John and James, sons of Zebedee, were killed by the Jews<sup>(5)</sup>. The *Canon Muratorianus*, written between the years 170 and 220, states that Paul wrote only to seven churches by "following the rule of his predecessor John", who wrote to seven churches in *Revelation*<sup>(6)</sup>. Tertullian (c. 160-220), apparently, affirms that the exile of John to Patmos happened in the same time in which Peter and Paul were executed (*De praescriptione haereticorum*, 36). On the other hand, although Tertullian mentions the perversity of

<sup>(2)</sup> In the past the following supported the reinterpretation of Irenaeus: J.M. MACDONALD, *The Life and Writings of St. John* (London 1877) 169-170; S.H. CHASE, "The Date of the Apocalypse. The Evidence of Irenaeus", *JTS* 8 (1907) 431-435; G. EDMUNDSON, *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (London 1913) 164-165, among others. Nowadays, GENTRY, *Before*, 45-59.

<sup>(3)</sup> Cf. F.W. FARRAR, *The Early Days of Christianity* (New York 1884) 398; E.C. SELWYN, *The Christian Prophets and the Prophetic Apocalypse* (London 1900) 125; D. GUTHRIE, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL 31970) 17; J. MOFFATT, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine, The Expositor's Greek Testament* (ed. W.R. NICOLL) (Grand Rapids 1980) V, 320; MOBERLY, "Revelation", 380-383.

<sup>(4)</sup> On Irenaeus as the only source of this tradition, cf. M. STUART, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (Andover 1845) I, 281-282; II, 269; M.S. TERRY, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids [1883] 1974) 237-239; W.H. SIMCOX, *The Revelation of St. John Divine* (Cambridge 1898) xiii; C.C. TORREY, *The Apocalypse of John* (New Haven 1958) 78; B. NEWMAN, "The Fallacy of the Domitian Hypothesis. Critique of the Irenaeus Source as a Witness for the Contemporary-Historical Approach to the Interpretation of the Apocalypse", *NTS* 10 (1962) 133-139.

<sup>(5)</sup> Papias was quoted by Philip of Side (*TU*, II, 170) and Georgius Hamartolus (*Chronicon* 3.134). Swete has stated that Papias does not affirm that the brothers suffered martyrdom at the same time. Therefore, John might have died at any date before the last days of Jerusalem. Cf. H.B. SWETE, *Commentary on Revelation* (Gran Rapids [1911] 1977) clxxix-clxxx.

<sup>(6)</sup> Cf. GENTRY, *Before*, 93-94.

Domitian, he does not mention John and his exile (*Apol.* 5). Finally, Epiphanes (c. 315-403) affirms in *Haeres.* 51.12,33 that John wrote *Revelation* during the reign of Claudius<sup>(7)</sup>.

The testimony of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) is not conclusive because it affirms that the apostle John left Patmos "after the death of the tyrant" (*Quis Salvus Dives* 42). Although most authors presume that Clement was referring to Domitian, in Jewish, Christian and Pagan literature, the qualifier "tyrant" is linked to Nero<sup>(8)</sup>. On the other hand, there does not seem to have existed a persecution campaign against the Christians during the reign of Domitian. His repressive policy was rather selective and aimed at influential people on suspicion of conspiracy, including members of his own family<sup>(9)</sup>. It is probable, in consequence, that Clement had thought of Nero when he wrote about the time when the apostle John left Patmos after the death of the "tyrant". The same thing can be inferred from Origen (c. 185-254), disciple of Clement, because he asserts that John was exiled to Patmos by "the King of the Romans" (*Matthew* 16.6) without identifying him<sup>(10)</sup>.

In conclusion, the external evidence cannot date with certainty the *Book of Revelation* at the end of the reign of Domitian, because there is an important patristic tendency that attests or points to an early dating during the reign of Nero or even before it.

## II. Internal Evidence

### 1. *The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple*

In *Revelation* there is no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. It would be inexplicable in terms of religious identity if the work had been written after the year 70, because John belonged to a mentality and a culture that was notably Hebrew. He considers himself a genuine Jew, a member of the true Synagogue (Rev 2,9;3,9),

<sup>(7)</sup> Cf. GENTRY, *Before*, 104-105. Recently, M.-É. Boismard has defended the tradition of the early martyrdom of the apostle John, son of Zebedee (*Le martyre de Jean l'apôtre* [Paris 1996]).

<sup>(8)</sup> Cf. GENTRY, *Before*, 68-83.

<sup>(9)</sup> EDMUNDSON, *The Church in Rome*, 168; G.W. BARKER – W.L. LANE – J.R. MICHAELS, *The New Testament Speaks* (New York 1969) 368; L.L. THOMPSON, *The Book of Revelation. Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford 1990) 95-115.

<sup>(10)</sup> Cf. GENTRY, *Before*, 97-99.

Holy Priest of the future Kingdom (1,6;20,6), specially concerned with the rules of ritual pureness (3,4-5; 14,4; 21,8,27; 22,11.14-15), one of the 144.000 saved ones of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (7,4-8; 14,1-5; 21,12).

After the year 70, this silence would be inexplicable in terms of scriptural exegesis, because the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple was prophesied by the synoptic gospels<sup>(11)</sup> following the tradition from Micah and Jeremiah<sup>(12)</sup>. Under the influence of Daniel<sup>(13)</sup>, the destruction of Jerusalem was linked to the profanation of its Sanctuary<sup>(14)</sup>.

But John contradicts this prophetic tradition by affirming in one of his prophecies that the believers are inside the Sanctuary and that the exterior court has been taken by the gentiles, who will trample on the Holy City for 42 months (Rev 11,1-2). The Temple, in consequence, is still standing. Moreover, John prophesies that a tenth part of Jerusalem will be destroyed by an earthquake (11,13). It is clear that when John wrote his prophecy, Jerusalem and his Temple had not been destroyed yet. Therefore, *Revelation* must have been redacted before the year 70<sup>(15)</sup>.

It is not strange that John had contradicted the synoptic tradition, since in the beginning there were two antagonistic positions in the Community of Jerusalem in respect of the Temple. It is necessary to recall the great persecution against the Community in the year 36. Everything began with the execution — or lynching — of Stephen (Acts 6,8–7,60) in the context of a revolt which was started among the Hellenist Jews, specially those from the Synagogue of the Freedmen (6,9.12). Then, a wave of arrests was ordered by the religious authorities: “with authority received from the chief priests (26,10; cf. 22,4-5), Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison”

<sup>(11)</sup> Mark 13,1-2; Matt 24,1-2; Luke 21,5-6.

<sup>(12)</sup> Mic 3,12 (cf. Jer 26,18); Jer 7,12-15.

<sup>(13)</sup> Dan 9,27; 11,31; 12,11.

<sup>(14)</sup> Mark 13,14; Matt 24,15. Cf. Luke 21,20.

<sup>(15)</sup> During the nineteenth century the following supported this position: F. BLEEK, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Edinburgh <sup>2</sup>1870) II, 226; MACDONALD, *The Life and Writings of St. John*, 159; F. DÜSTERDIECK, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation of John* (New York <sup>3</sup>1886) 46-47; B. WEISS, *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament* (New York 1889) II, 82. In the twentieth century: TORREY, *The Apocalypse*, 87; ROBINSON, *Redating*, 240-242; GENTRY, *Before*, 165-192; WILSON, “The Problem”, 604.

(8,3). While some were flogged, others were sentenced to death (22,19; 26,10). Those who could escape "were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria" (8,1)<sup>(16)</sup>. However it is curious to confirm that this persecution did not affect the apostles who were left undamaged (8,1), but only the Hellenist Jewish-Christians. The cause of this focused persecution can be found in the verbal attack of Stephen — and his followers — against the establishment of the Temple. His ideas were based on Isaiah 66,1-2 (cf. Acts 7,44-50), but the apostles and the rest of the Community did not share this position (Acts 2,46; 3,1; 5,12.20-21.42; cf. 21,20-26). This opposition of opinions explains the various prophetic traditions about the Temple: destroyed according to the synoptic gospels, preserved according to Rev 11,1-13.

Many authors have argued that Rev 11,1-2 would be an independent fragment, written before the year 70 and incorporated into the text later on<sup>(17)</sup>. But it is not convincing that this passage (which prophecies the profanation of the Holy City for 42 months, excepting the Sanctuary where the believers are sheltered) could have been incorporated into the definitive version after the total destruction of Jerusalem, the demolition of the Temple and the annihilation of the zealot resistance entrenched inside of it.

Could John write the passage 11,1-2 at the end of the reign of Domitian, by placing it in a past time with the purpose of antedating it? Could John try to give it a fictitious antiquity which it didn't have?<sup>(18)</sup>. But if it had happened that way, John would not have written about believers inside the Temple. He would not have "forgotten" to mention that the Jewish-Christians — the real believers — did not stay in the Temple, but they escaped from Jerusalem.

There is also another hypothesis that proposes that Rev 11,1-2 does not make any reference to the physical Temple (already destroyed), but it would be a symbolic representation of the Community of the Saints after the year 70, pursued by the Pagans<sup>(19)</sup>. This hypothesis is not convincing either, because the Temple is located in a Holy City which

<sup>(16)</sup> All biblical citations come from the New Revised Standard Version, unless I indicate the contrary.

<sup>(17)</sup> R.H. CHARLES, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (Edinburgh 1920) I, lxii-lxiii, xciii-xciv, 270-271; MOFFATT, *The Revelation*, 281-295.

<sup>(18)</sup> Cf. H.B. SWETE, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London 1906) 221.

<sup>(19)</sup> W. MILLIGAN, *Discussions on the Apocalypse* (London 1893) 95; G.B. CAIRD, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York 1966) 132; R.H. MOUNCE, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids 1977) 35.

stays still intact (11,2), including its square (11,8). Therefore, it has not been damaged by the fire and destruction which demolished it almost completely in the year 70. Moreover, John explains that this is the Great City where Jesus was crucified (11,8). Besides, he prophesies that a tenth part of Jerusalem will be torn down by an earthquake (11,13) as punishment for their sins (11,8). It is obvious John did not know what the Roman army did with the city after they conquered it. Therefore, the Sanctuary mentioned in 11,1 is not the Community of Saints after the year 70, but the historic Temple of Jerusalem before the beginning of the rebellion. Inside that Temple the believers will have shelter and will be preserved from the profanation of the Holy City (11,2) and from its partial destruction (11,13).

Others argue that the Sanctuary would be rather a celestial Temple<sup>(20)</sup>. But the Sanctuary of Rev 11,1-2 is not in heaven (as in 11,19; 15,5), but in the historic Jerusalem, a holy and sinful city at the same time (11,2.8). The Sanctuary shelters neither the throne of God (as in 7,15; 8,3), nor the Ark of its Covenant (as in 11,19).

Although John writes before the destruction of the Temple, he affirms that at the end of time, in the new Jerusalem, there will not be a Sanctuary, because God and the Lamb will be its Sanctuary. The city will be enlightened by the glory of God with the Lamb as its lamp (Rev 21,22-23). This description has been used as an argument in favor of a late dating of *Revelation*: John affirms that in the new Jerusalem, there will not be a Sanctuary because it was destroyed already. But there is another explanation. In rabbinic literature a symbolic relation between the lamp of the Temple and the lamp of the King Messiah was established<sup>(21)</sup>. It is stated, moreover, that the light of the Temple will be necessary only in this world, because in the coming world the Messiah will be like a lamp<sup>(22)</sup>. The logical corollary of this rabbinic argument is that during the Messianic era,

<sup>(20)</sup> C.H. GIBLIN, *The Book of Revelation*. The Open Book of Prophecy (Collegeville, MN 1991); M. BACHMANN, "Himmlisch: Der 'Tempel Gottes' von Apk 11:1", *NTS* 40 (1994) 474-480.

<sup>(21)</sup> According to the Scriptures, God will be the eternal light that will enlighten Jerusalem (Isa 60,1-3.19-20). His promise of giving David and his lineage a lamp (1 Kgs 11,36; 15,4; 2 Kgs 8,19; 2 Chr 21,7) was transformed into a messianic prophecy: "There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one" (Ps 132,17). God himself declared that His Chosen one would be "light" to the nations (Isa 42,6; 49,6).

<sup>(22)</sup> D. FLUSSER, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem 1988) 457-459.



the holy people will not need the material Temple anymore, because God himself will be their spiritual Sanctuary, whose lamp will be the Messiah<sup>(23)</sup>. It is exactly what is stated in Rev 21,22-23: the new Jerusalem will be enlightened by the glory of God, with the Lamb as its lamp. There will not be a Sanctuary, because God and the Lamb will be its new Sanctuary (cf. John 2,19-21). Therefore, it is not necessary to suppose from Rev 21,22 that at the time John described the new Jerusalem, the Temple was already destroyed.

## 2. *The flight to Pella*

The siege of Jerusalem was announced by Luke (21,20) by following an old prophetic tradition (Jer 6,6). The command of leaving Jerusalem is found in the three synoptic gospels (Mark 13,14-19; Matt 24,15-21; Luke 21,20-24). But in the *Book of Revelation* John asserts that the believers will stay inside the Sanctuary, surrounded by gentiles profaning the exterior court and the Holy City (Rev 11,1-2). Maybe he was inspired by 1 Macc 6,48-54.

In the passage Rev 11,1-13, John places the death of the “two witnesses” in a context of war, of the siege of Jerusalem. That context does not have any relation to the rebellion from 66 to 70. If John had written during or after those years, he would have known that most radical rebels had the control of the Temple during almost the entire rebellion. At first the *sicarii* or assassins — under the command of Menahem, a descendent of Judas the Galilean, the founder of the zealot party — transformed the Temple into their headquarters. Shortly after the murder of Menahem, the zealots regrouped and regained control of the Temple by transforming it into a bastion for their fight against the High Sacerdotal party. They successfully resisted behind the walls the attacks of the troops of another rebel, Simon bar Giora. But the defenders of the Sanctuary split up very soon. John of Gischala, leader of the most numerous faction, kept the control of the exterior court of the Temple, while Eleazar, son of Simon, and the minority zealot faction entrenched themselves inside the interior court and in the *sancta sanctorum*. Despite the violent struggles among the three rebel factions, the sacrifices in the Temple never ceased. The priests and the suppliants had clear access to the altar, after being checked for weapons. However many of them died because of the large quantities of projectiles and arrows cast. When

(23) FLUSSER, *Judaism*, 464.

Titus camped in front of the city with four legions and numerous allied and auxiliary troops, the internal fights ceased for a while. But one day, while many pilgrims were preparing the celebration of the Passover of the year 70 in Jerusalem, the troops of John of Gischala displaced the zealots of Eleazar by surprise from the *sancta sanctorum*. Although the zealots escaped unscathed, they soon gave up their fight against John of Gischala by joining their forces with him against Simon bar Giora. Shortly after, however, a massive assault of the Romans took place in one of the walls of the city, and John and Eleazar accepted to join their forces with Simon in order to defend Jerusalem together. But their reckless courage could not check the slow and steady advance of the Romans. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, the final assault took place. The interior atrium of the Temple was captured and completely destroyed after being set on fire<sup>(24)</sup>.

If John had prophesied during or after these events, could he have written that believers were in the Sanctuary while the exterior court had surrendered to the gentiles and that the Holy City will be trampled on for 42 months (11,1-2)? But, John not only wrote that the believers stayed in the Sanctuary of Jerusalem. He also warned the people of God to escape from Rome, not from Jerusalem<sup>(25)</sup>, before it is

<sup>(24)</sup> Josephus, *Bell. Iud.* 2-6.

<sup>(25)</sup> Arguments in favor of Rome as Babylon the Great (Rev 17-18) can be found in: J.E. BRUNS, "The Contrasted Woman of Apocalypse 12 and 17", *CBQ* 26 (1964) 459-463; A.Y. COLLINS, "Revelation 18: Tount-Song or Dirge?", *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (ed. J. LAMBRECHT) (Leuven 1980) 185-204; C.P. THIEDE, "Babylon, der andere Ort: Anmerkungen zu 1 Petr 5,13 und Apg 12,17", *Bib* 67 (1986) 532-538; R. BERGMIEIER, "Die Erzähure und das Tier: Apk 12,18-13,18 und 17f.: Eine quellen- und redaktionskritische Analyse", *ANRW II* 25.5 (1988) 3899-3916; MOBERLY, "Revelation", 383-389; R. BAUCKHAM, *The Climax of Prophecy*. Studies in the Book of Revelation (Edinburgh 1993); A.Y. COLLINS, "Feminine Symbolism in the Book of Revelation", *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993) 20-33; H. GIESEN, "Das Römische Reich im Spiegel der Johannes-Apokalypse", *ANRW II* 26.3 (1996) 2501-2614; J.N. KRAYBILL, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse* (Sheffield 1996); D.E. AUNE, *Revelation 17-22* (Nashville 1998); G.K. BEALE, *The Book of Revelation*. A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids 1999). Arguments in favor of Jerusalem as Babylon the Great can be found in: J.S. RUSSELL, *The Parousia*. The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming (Grand Rapids [1878] 1999); W. MILLIGAN, *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (London 1892); J.M. FORD, *Revelation* (New York 1975); GENTRY, *Before*; D.K. PRESTON, *Who is this Babylon?* (Ardmore, OK 1999). But Rev 17,18 is too conclusive to have doubts about Rome as Babylon the Great: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth".

destroyed: "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (Rev 18,4-5).

According to the prophecy of John, believers living in Jerusalem stay sheltered in the Temple, protected from the profanation of the Holy City, while believers living in Rome are persuaded to escape before the city is destroyed. In conclusion, at the time John wrote the *Book of Revelation*, the Jewish-Christians had not escaped to Pella yet, and Menahem, Eleazar, son of Simon, John of Gischala and Simon bar Giora had not taken control of the Temple and the Holy City yet<sup>(26)</sup>.

### 3. The deaths of Paul, Peter and James the Just

John prophesies about two witnesses killed in Jerusalem (Rev 11,1-13). According to an old tradition, Peter would have died in the same year Paul was decapitated, that is to say, in 67<sup>(27)</sup>. Did John refer to them when he wrote about the two witnesses? But his description of the death of the two witnesses differs radically from the historical circumstances in which Peter and Paul were executed. While the two witnesses are executed in Jerusalem in the context of a war in which believers are protected inside the Temple, Peter and Paul were executed in Rome during a war in which Jewish-Christians escaped from Jerusalem.

But Peter could have been crucified in Rome in 64, during the repression that took place after the fire in Rome<sup>(28)</sup>. This alternative

<sup>(26)</sup> According to Eusebius, the Jewish-Christians went to Pella "before the war", because God ordered it through a revelation received by "approved men" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.5). However, it is very probable that this escape had taken place after the disastrous retreat of Cestius, when "many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink" (Josephus, *Bell. Iud.* 2.20.1).

<sup>(27)</sup> According to this patristic tradition, Peter and Paul died in the same year, the fourteenth year of Nero's reign (Eusebius, *Chronicon* 2.211; *Hist. eccl.* 2.25; Jerome, *De viris ill.* 5;12), that is to say, between October of 67 and June of 68.

<sup>(28)</sup> Eusebius and Jerome affirmed that Peter and Paul died in the same year. But some Fathers used to present their lives as parallel lives. Irenaeus, for example, assured his readers that Peter and Paul founded the church of Rome. Cf. C.P. THIEDE, *Simon Peter. From Galilee to Rome* (Grand Rapids 1988) 157, 190-191. In my opinion, Peter was probably crucified in 64, during the repression that took place as a consequence of the fire in Rome, three years before the death of Paul in 67.

chronology does not fit with what is described in Rev 11,1-13 either. There are several passages that make reference to the persecution of the saints (6,9-11; 7,14; 12,17; 13,7.10.15; 16,6; 17,6; 18,6.24; 19,2; 20,4), but they are too general and it is difficult to interpret them as a reference to Peter's martyrdom. Could John write his work after the death of Peter without mentioning the crucifixion of the first of the apostles?

The passage about the two witnesses (Rev 11,1-13) does not mention the death of James the Just, "the brother of the Lord", in 62 either. According to Josephus, the unbending High Priest Ananus, son of Ananus, from the Sadducee party, took advantage of the death of the procurator, Festus, and the absence of the new procurator, Albinus, as well. He persuaded the Sanhedrin to sentence James and some others to death by lapidation as Law offenders. The moderate Jews refused with indignation these executions and immediately sent envoys to king Agrippa and the procurator Albinus, who was coming from Alexandria. The High Priest Ananus was accused of acting without Rome's consent. The anger of Albinus was soothed when Agrippa gave instructions for the dismissal of Ananus, who held the pontificate for only 3 months (*Ant. Iud.* 20.9.1).

If John had wanted to refer to James the Just, he would not have written about the death of the "two witnesses" (Rev 11,3), "the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (11,4). He would not have stated that believers are sheltered in the Temple, harassed by the gentiles (11, 1-2), because the High Priest and the Sanhedrin were the ones who sentenced James to die by lapidation. On the other hand, the death of James did not delight the population (as in 11,10), because Josephus reports that the most moderate sector and the procurator himself became angry with the sentence (*Ant. Iud.* 20.9.1). John writes that the bodies of the two witnesses were hindered from burial (Rev 11,9), but there does not seem to be any evidence of that in the case of James. Finally, Josephus does not say a word about a great earthquake that had partially destroyed Jerusalem (11,13).

The conclusion is clear: the passage about the two witnesses (Rev 11,1-13) does not mention the decapitation of Paul in 67; neither the crucifixion of Peter in 67 or 64, nor the lapidation of James in 62. But if John had written after some of these executions, how could he be silent about their deaths and prophesy, in turn, about the death of the "two witnesses", "the two olive trees and the two lampstands that

stand before the Lord of the earth"? Although this argument is not as conclusive as the two previous ones, it is going in the same direction: John did not say a word about the martyrdoms of James, Peter and Paul because he wrote the *Book of Revelation* before 62.

#### 4. *The earthquake of Laodicea*

In his epistle to the Community of Laodicea, John wrote:

I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. (Rev 3,15-20)

The message is clear. The Community had much material well-being, just like the opulent city of Laodicea, which was known for its banking, wool industry and medical school<sup>(29)</sup>. On the other hand, the Community was "wretched" (3,17) due to its spiritual poverty. Therefore, it had to repent before the return of the Messiah.

It is noticeable that, at the time this epistle was being written, the city had not yet been destroyed by the earthquake of 60<sup>(30)</sup>. In fact, after sarcastically alluding to its hot springs and warm mud-baths ("I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot"), to its banking ("I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich"), to its black wool manufacturing industry ("and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen"), and to its ophthalmic medicine ("and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see"), it is impossible to imagine that, knowing the magnitude of the disaster, John had not interpreted the earthquake as a sign of God.

In fact, the earthquake is a recurrent subject in the OT: Ps 75,2-3; 97,4-5, Ezek 38,18-19, Joel 3,16, Mic 1,3-4, Zech 14,3-5.

<sup>(29)</sup> W.M. RAMSAY, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and their place in the plan of the Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids [1904] 1963) chap. 29.

<sup>(30)</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.27.

John himself wrote:

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake. (Rev 6,12)

Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. (Rev 8,5)

Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Rev 11,12-13)

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Rev 11,19)

The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!". And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake, such as had not occurred since people were upon the earth, so violent was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. (Rev 16,17-19)

According to the three previous arguments, the epistle to the Community of Laodicea was written before the years 62-70. The epistle presents a marked messianic-escathological tendency. It has many allusions to the city's geography and economy. It was written by someone interested in the earthquake as a literary resource linked to God's judgement. With those antecedents, the absence of any reference to the earthquake of 60 shows that *Revelation* was written before that time.

### 5. *The symbolism of the Beasts*

The "blasphemous names" of the Beast who rises out of the sea (Rev 13,1) allude to the divine titles of Roman emperors. Influenced by the eastern mores of the Tolemaic and Seleucid monarchies, they were called "lord and god" (Augustus, Domitian, maybe Nero), or simply "god" (Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Domitian). Therefore, the argument which links Rev 4,11 to the imperial cult of Domitian is not conclusive<sup>(31)</sup>.

According to John, one of the Beast's heads seems to be mortally wounded, but its deadly wound is healed and the Beast lives (Rev

<sup>(31)</sup> Cf. F.O. PARKER, "'Our Lord and God' in Rev 4,11: Evidence for the Late Date of Revelation?", *Bib* 82 (2001) 209-217, 219-220, 224-226.

13,3.12.14). Many authors have seen in this passage an allusion to Nero's suicide. In my opinion, however, it is rather a reference to Julius Caesar's assassination, which led to a long, bloody civil war, but it did not cause the fall of the Empire<sup>(32)</sup>.

A second Beast rises out of the earth. It has two horns like a lamb, but it speaks as a dragon (Rev 13,11), evidently referring to paganism. It makes everyone on the earth worship the first Beast, except for those whose names are written in life's book. The verses that describe the worship of the Beast (13,8.12-15) are closely connected to Roman imperial cult. After the death of Julius Caesar, the Roman Senate officially decreed the establishment of the cult of *divus Iulius*. The adopted son of Julius Caesar, Augustus, was honoured while alive as *divi filius*. After he died, the cult of *divus Augustus* began. Caligula went still further, since he was worshipped in his own temple in Rome. One of the first actions of Nero was the establishment of the cult of *divus Claudius*, which he joined with the cult of *divus Augustus*. Although Nero stimulated a self-deification policy pretending to be an incarnation of Apollo (among other gods), apparently there was no officially established cult. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the imperial cult had been considered a legal duty for Trajan's government<sup>(33)</sup>.

Without considering its legal aspects, the cult of goddess Rome, the deified Caesars, the reigning emperor and the imperial family extended widely into the Greek cities of Asia since the Augustus era, in order to obtain political and economic advantages from Rome. Any sort of omission had to cause hostility towards the local communities. In this sense, Rev 13,15-17 perhaps alludes to some kind of local or regional pressure<sup>(34)</sup>. About the worshipped beast's identity, John writes: "the number of the beast" is "the number of a person", that is to say, 666 (13,18), a Nero Caesar cryptogram in the Hebrew language<sup>(35)</sup>. The reference to Nero shows that the final version of *Revelation* was written in the first years of Nero's reign, that is, between 54 and 60.

In the famous whore passage, John beholds a woman called

<sup>(32)</sup> This hypothesis has been proposed by WILSON, "The Problem", 597-604.

<sup>(33)</sup> Cf. GENTRY, *Before*, 261-276, 279.

<sup>(34)</sup> Cf. MOBERLY, "Revelation", 377-379, 389; SLATER, "Dating", 254.

<sup>(35)</sup> FARRAR, *The Early Days*, 471; D.R. HILLERS, "Revelation 13:18 and A Scroll from Murabba'at", *BASOR* 170 (1963) 65; GENTRY, *Before*, 193-212; WILSON, "The Problem", 598.

“Babylon the great” (Rev 17,5) “the great city that rules over the kings of the earth” (17,18). She is seated on seven hills (17,9), in reference to Rome<sup>(36)</sup>. Some authors argue that Rome was called “Babylon” after 70, alluding to the destruction of the first Temple of Jerusalem led by Babylon in 587<sup>(37)</sup>. But 1 Pet, including its reference to Rome as Babylon (5, 13), is usually dated to the middle of the 60’s. This shows the weakness of the argument.

John describes the woman as drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Rev 17,6). Is this verse a reference to the mass, systematic persecution commanded by Domitian? But the existence of that persecution has been questioned by noted scholars<sup>(38)</sup>. It has been proposed that John describes the repression caused by Nero in 64<sup>(39)</sup>. If that is true, why did John prophecy the death of the two witnesses in Jerusalem (11,3-13), without referring to the executions of James, Peter and Paul? In my view, the saints and martyrs of Jesus’ blood that Rome spills (17,6) is John’s vision in the future, like the vision about the beast who is given the authority to wage war for forty-two months on the saints and to conquer them (13,5-7). Both visions are closely linked to a previous one, in which martyrs in heaven “were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed” (6,11). Concerning the time John was banished to Patmos (a supposed banishment, since it is not mentioned in 1,9), there is no need to think inevitably about Domitian or Nero. According to Josephus, similar steps were taken by the local authorities. For instance, Cuspius Fadus, procurator of Judaea (44-46), was able to end the hard and bloody fights between the Jews of Perea and the people of Philadelphia (Amman). After three Jewish leaders were arrested, Cuspius Fadus commanded one of them to be executed and the other two to be exiled (*Ant. Iud.* 20.1.1).

<sup>(36)</sup> Cf. note 25. On a coin (or medallion) of Vespasian, Rome is represented as a woman seated on seven hills. Cf. E. STAUFFER, *Christ and the Caesars*. Historical Sketches (Philadelphia 1955) 173.

<sup>(37)</sup> A.Y. COLLINS, *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London 1989) 998-999; THOMPSON, *The Book*, 14.

<sup>(38)</sup> Cf. note 9.

<sup>(39)</sup> Cf. F.J.A. HORT, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London 1908) I, xxvi; GENTRY, *Before*, 285-299.



In the same famous whore passage, the woman is sitting on a scarlet Beast, having seven heads and ten horns (Rev 17,3). An Angel explains that the seven heads represent seven hills and seven kings. Five of them have fallen, the sixth one still reigns and the seventh one has not yet come. When he comes, he must continue a little while, so the beast (one of the fallen kings who ascends from the abyss) shall be his successor (17,7-11). Regarding the names of the five fallen kings and the sixth reigning king, the possibilities change depending on whether Julius Caesar is considered the first emperor or not, and whether the brief governments of Galba, Otho and Vitellius are included or not<sup>(40)</sup>. Therefore, the sixth king might be Nero (54-68), Galba (68-69) or Vespasian (69-79):

|   |                 |                 |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> fallen king   | Julius Caesar   | Augustus        | Augustus        |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> fallen king   | Augustus        | Tiberius        | Tiberius        |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> fallen king   | Tiberius        | Gaius           | Gaius           |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> fallen king   | Gaius           | Claudius        | Claudius        |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> fallen king   | Claudius        | Nero            | Nero            |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> reigning king   | Nero            | Galba           | Vespasian       |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> future king   | Unknown to John | Unknown to John | Unknown to John |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> king (one of the fallen kings who ascends from the abyss) |                 |                 |                 |

According to many scholars, the beast “that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction” (17,11) might be Nero Caesar whose number is 666 (13,18). In fact, there is evidence that, already in 69, there were people who believed that Nero was not actually dead and had sought refuge among the Parthians. They used to place his image upon the rostra, dressed in robes of state. Proclamations were published in his name as if he were still alive and ready to return to Rome, in order to take vengeance on his enemies. In relation to this belief, there were three pretenders who claimed to be Nero<sup>(41)</sup>. The myth was known by Jewish and Jewish-Christian circles (*Sibylline Oracles*, *Ascension of Isaiah*), who began to foretell that Nero was back from death as the Beliar demon<sup>(42)</sup>.

<sup>(40)</sup> I follow the traditional interpretation of considering the emperors already dead as “fallen”. Cf. Moberly and his hypothesis that the five “fallen” kings are five emperors who died a violent death (Julius Caesar, Gaius, Nero, Galba, Otho). MOBERLY, “Revelation”, 377, 383, n. 22, 385.

<sup>(41)</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.2; 2.8-9; Suetonius, *Nero* 57; Zonaras, *Ann.* 11.15-18.

<sup>(42)</sup> Cf. GENTRY, *Before*, 74-77, 300-307.

But the internal evidence shows that the *Book of Revelation* was written in the first years of Nero's reign: between the years 54 and 60. In fact, Nero is the sixth reigning king, since the ancient Roman, Jewish and Jewish-Christian writers considered Julius Caesar the first emperor<sup>(43)</sup>. But if Nero still lived in the time of the prophecy, who is the beast who "was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit" (Rev 17,8)?

According to Paul, the return of Jesus Christ will be preceded by the arrival of a powerful enemy of God:

As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? (2 Thess 2,1-5)

It is evident that Paul was not considering Nero when he wrote about the opponent of God, since the epistle was written in 51, when Claudius governed and Nero was 13 years old. So, who was "the lawless one", "the one destined for destruction" that "opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God"? The description fits Antiochus Epiphanes perfectly according to Dan 8,10-12; 11,36-37. In fact, in the synoptic gospels, the eschatological return of Christ is preceded by a "suffering" (NRSV) or "tribulation" (NASB) never seen before<sup>(44)</sup>, with the "desolating sacrilege" (NRSV) or "abomination of desolation" (NASB) as its symbol<sup>(45)</sup>, indissolubly connected to the impiety of Antiochus Epiphanes<sup>(46)</sup>.

But according to John, the beast who "was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit" (Rev 17,8) is one of the fallen kings (17,9-11). Although John did not reveal the identity of the beast who

<sup>(43)</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.34; Suetonius, *Iulius* 76; Josephus, *Ant. Iud.* 18.2.2; 18.6.10; *4 Ezra* 11-12; *Or. Sib.* 5.12-15. Cf. A.Y. COLLINS, *Crisis and Catharsis. The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia 1984) 60-62; GENTRY, *Before*, 154-159.

<sup>(44)</sup> Mark 13,19; Matt 24,21.

<sup>(45)</sup> Mark 13,14; Matt 24,15. Cf. Luke 21,20.

<sup>(46)</sup> 1 Macc 1,54; 9,27; Dan 9,27; 11,31; 12,1.11.

ascends from the abyss (17,8), it might be Augustus, explicitly associated with the Messiah's birth (cf. Luke 2,1) and implicitly linked to the scarlet Dragon with seven crowned heads who tries to devour the newborn Messiah (Rev 12,3-5). It might also be Tiberius, probably identified as the beast who crucified the Messiah (11,7-8). But Caligula is very close to the Danielic figure of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan 8,10-12; 11,36-37), archetype of the Antichrist (2 Thess 2,3-4), since he attempted to be worshipped in the Temple of Jerusalem<sup>(47)</sup>.

If my hypothesis is correct, it was just at the end of the first century when some Jewish-Christian circles began to relate the beast who "was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit" to the last of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, due to the increasing veneration to Nero's memory. In fact, in the *Sibylline Oracles* and the *Ascension of Isaiah*, it is foretold that the demon Beliar shall descend from his firmament as a king of iniquity, murderer of his mother.

\*  
\* \* \*

The external evidence does not allow us to date the Book of Revelation with certainty the end of Domitian's government, since there is an important patristic tendency in favor of Nero's reign or even before that. The internal evidence shows that as John wrote his prophecy, Jerusalem and its Temple had not yet been destroyed, the rebels had not yet taken the control of the Temple, the Jewish-Christian Community had not yet left Jerusalem, the martyrs James, Peter and Paul had not yet been executed, Laodicea had not yet been destroyed because of an earthquake, and Nero Caesar (666) still was the reigning emperor, the sixth one of the dynasty according to Roman, Jewish and Jewish-Christian literature. Therefore, the work should be dated between the years 54 and 60. In this context, Rev 13,3 alludes to the murder of Julius Caesar, and 17,8 to the Antichrist's return, identified as a fallen emperor who might be Augustus, Tiberius or Caligula.

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<sup>(47)</sup> Josephus, *Ant. Iud.* 18.8.2.

## SUMMARY

In this article I try to demonstrate that the *Book of Revelation* was written in the first years of Nero's reign, because (a) there is an important patristic tradition in favor of Nero and (b) the internal evidence shows that the text was redacted after Nero's ascension to the throne in 54 and before the earthquake of Laodicea in 60.

# ANIMADVERSIONES

## The Line of Thought in Romans 7,15-20

Within the passage 7,15-20 there is a striking parallelism, namely between verses 15b-16a and 19a-20a:

|     |                                   |     |  |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--|
| 15b | For I do not do what I want       | 19a | For I do not do the good I want          |
| 15c | but I do the very thing I hate.   | 19b | but the evil I do not want is what I do. |
| 16a | Now if I do what I do not want... | 20a | Now if I do what I do not want...        |

In his recent study “Der Mensch im Schatten Adams. Römer 7,7-25a” Otfried Hofius detects a much more extended symmetry in verses 14-20<sup>(1)</sup>. He suggests that two subunits appear to be symmetric; verses 14-17 and 18-20 are “ganz parallel aufgebaut”<sup>(2)</sup>. His presentation of the Greek text is as follows<sup>(3)</sup>:

|     |  |   |     |
|-----|--|---|-----|
| 14a | Οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι<br>ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστίν,        | Οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι  | 18a |
| 14b | ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι<br>πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. | οὐκ οἶκεί ἐν ἐμοί,<br>τοῦτ' ἐστίν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν,        |     |
| 15a | ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι<br>οὐ γινώσκω·                    | τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι,<br>τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ· | 18b |
| 15b | οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω,                          | οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν,  | 19a |
| 15c | ἀλλ' ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ.                              | ἀλλὰ ὁ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω.                                | 19b |
| 16a | εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ,                          | εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω ἐγὼ τοῦτο ποιῶ,                                   | 20a |
| 16b | σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός·                           |   |     |
| 17a | νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ<br>κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ              | οὐκέτι ἐγὼ<br>κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ                                   | 20b |
| 17b | ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.                      | ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.                                   | 20c |

The verbs ποιέω, πράσσω and κατεργάζομαι are synonyms. Both units, verses 14-17 and 18-20, begin with a *thesis* (see οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι in v. 14a and οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι in v. 18a). Then follows a double *motivation*: twice two

<sup>(1)</sup> O. HOFIUS, “Der Mensch im Schatten Adams. Römer 7,7-25a”, *Paulusstudien* (WUNT 143; Tübingen 2002) II, 104-154. Of course, the structure of vv. 14-20 is but a small item — though not without importance — in this lengthy theologically rich and challenging study. For a similar symmetric arrangement see, e.g., J.-N. ALETTI, *Israël et la loi dans la lettre aux Romains* (LD 173; Paris 1992) 138; “Rom 7.7-23 encore une fois: enjeux et propositions”, *NTS* 48 (2002) 358-376, esp. 366-367; S. ROMANELLO, *Una lege buona ma impotente*. Analisi retorico-letteraria di Rm 7,7-25 nel suo contesto (SRivBib 35; Bologna 2000) 91-97.

<sup>(2)</sup> HOFIUS, “Der Mensch im Schatten Adams”, 136

<sup>(3)</sup> Ibid. The punctuation is the same. For easier reference to the text we have specified all individual clauses.

clauses, each with γάρ; the second motivation explains the first (see vv. 15a and 15bc; vv. 18b and 19ab). In each unit a conclusion with εἰ δὲ ... οὐκ ἐστὶ constitutes the *end* (see vv. 16a and 17ab; vv. 20a and 20bc)<sup>(4)</sup>. In his study Hofius further explains how between the two units there not only exists “eine formale, sondern zugleich auch eine inhaltliche Parallelität” (138)<sup>(5)</sup>.

It would seem that Hofius exaggerates the parallel character of the text unit and, consequently, also forces his comment at several points. The intention of this brief note is to reconstruct as carefully as possible Paul's way of arguing<sup>(6)</sup>.

### 1. *Particles and Clauses*

In order to detect the line of thought as well as the structure of 7,15-20, close attention must be given to the numerous particles which connect or separate the clauses. Within Hofius' unit (vv. 14-20) only two clauses are lacking a particle: verses 16b and 20b; each constitutes the apodosis of a conditional period. Six γάρ clauses are present: 14a.15a.15b.18a.18b.19a. There are five clauses that are introduced by the oppositional δέ: 14b.16a.17.18c.20a. Four clauses begin with the even stronger contrastive ἄλλὰ: 15c.17b.19b.20c. It should be noted that a verb is absent in the ἄλλὰ clauses of 17b and 20c: but sin that dwells within me “does it”.

The two conditional periods, verses 16 and 20, both have εἰ δὲ at the beginning of the protasis (vv. 16a and 20a) and, as already stated, no particle in the apodosis (vv. 16b and 20b; in each apodosis the adverb οὐκ ἐστὶ appears). The tenses in protasis and apodosis are present; so we have a simple case, the so-called “realis”: if this, then that.

Special attention must also be given to the γάρ ... δέ (or ἄλλὰ) sentences: verses 15bc; 18bc; 19ab. In this type of construction the real reason is often to be found in the second clause while the first one sometimes — but not always — possesses a concessive nuance.

What about verse 14? One would easily assume that in this verse there also is a γάρ ... δέ construction. Yet it would seem that verse 14b does not

<sup>(4)</sup> Cf. HOFIUS, “Der Mensch im Schatten Adams”, 138.

<sup>(5)</sup> See HOFIUS, “Der Mensch im Schatten Adams”, 139-141; quotation on p. 138.

<sup>(6)</sup> Our attention will be centered almost exclusively on the publication of Hofius. Yet compare, e.g., B. BYRNE, *Romans* (Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville 1996) 226-227: “The first two statements (vv 14-17 and vv 18-20) stand in close parallel: each begins with a sentence containing the verb to ‘know’ and mentioning the ‘fleshly’ constitution of the ‘I’ (v 14, v 18a); each concludes with precisely the same ten-word phrase attributing responsibility to ‘indwelling sin’ (v 17, v 20b); in between, each states the moral dilemma in virtually the same words (vv 15b-16a and vv 19-20a)”; J.D.G. DUNN, *Romans 1-8* (WBC; Waco, TX 1988) 377: “... the parallel between vv 14-17 and 18-23 has been given insufficient attention: the analysis in each case is largely the same, with the explanation of the “I”’s failure attributed to sin in both cases (vv 14-17, 18-20), but with the positive affirmation of the law in v 16 answered by the fuller statement of vv 21-23”; D.J. MOO, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids 1996) 456-457: “Recognizing the close parallelism between vv. 15-16 and vv. 19-20, some expositors divided vv. 15-20 into two parts, each of which explains a different part of v. 14 – vv. 15-16 the ‘spirituality’ of the law (cf. v. 16b – “the law is good”) and vv. 17-20 the “fleshiness” of *egō*. But no such neat division is possible, for the paragraph is pervaded throughout by the conflict between willing to do the right (e.g., what the law demands) and the failure to put it into practice”.

depend on the initial οἶδαμεν ... ὅτι of verse 14a; grammatically verse 14b can hardly be the parallel of ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστίν. Moreover, Paul could not say: “for ‘we’ know that ... ‘I’ am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin”. No, verse 14b is a new beginning, opposed to the whole of verse 14a<sup>(7)</sup>. Furthermore, verse 14a grounds (γάρ) verse 13<sup>(8)</sup>. Within the pericope 7,7-25 the caesura falls between verse 12 and verse 13<sup>(9)</sup>.

## 2. Verses 15-16

The statement of verse 14b, in contrast to verse 14a, presents itself as a radical thesis: “but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin”. The reader needs a grounding explanation. Paul motivates what he said in verse 14b by means of verse 15a: “For I do not understand my own actions”. But this last clause, again, is in need of clarification: “For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate” (v. 15bc). The point of this second motivation lies in verse 15c: “I do not understand what I do because I do what I hate!” The nuance present in the immediately preceding verse 15b, however, is not really concessive; “I do not do what I want” anticipates what is going to be said in verse 15c.

The δέ indicates that verse 16 is slightly contrastive. In the conditional period of this verse the protasis “Now if (εἰ δέ) I do what I do not want” almost literally repeats verse 15b: “For I do what I do not want”. The apodosis “I agree that the law is good” is a conclusion drawn from the minor in verse 16a and consequently also from the whole of verse 15. As to content verse 16b is the equivalent of what is stated in verse 14a: “for we know that the law is spiritual”<sup>(10)</sup>. Paul’s reasoning appears to have been: “since I do what I do not want, i.e., since in fact I want to observe the law, I cannot but agree that the law is good. I myself am the culprit; I do the very thing I hate”. In this way Paul defends the law just as in verse 14a.

The first round of argument is now completed<sup>(11)</sup>. Verses 15-16 belong together; they explain Paul’s assertion in verse 14b, namely: ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

## 3. Verses 17-20

Verse 17 contains, as it were, a correction of the thesis of verse 14b: it is not I who am accountable, but the indwelling sin is. Therefore verse 17 appears to be a second, more subtle thesis. Paul distinguishes between the I and sin. The νυνὶ δέ in verse 17a is not temporal but logical: “but in fact”. In the same clause Paul uses οὐκέτι equally in a logical way (“not ... then”),

(7) In the Greek text a full stop should be written at the end of v. 14a instead of a comma.

(8) HOFIUS, “Der Mensch im Schatten Adams”, 136, n. 115, interprets γάρ as having a “folgernden Sinn”. He translates the beginning of v. 14 as follows: “Wir wissen also”.

(9) Cf. J. LAMBRECHT, “Grammar and Reasoning in Romans 7,12 and 7,13-14”, *ETL* 80 (2004).

(10) In Hofius’ chart v. 16b has no parallel in the right column. The same applies to v. 14a: ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστίν.

(11) At the end of v. 16b a full stop is appropriate, not a semicolon.

without a reference to time<sup>(12)</sup>. A translation of verse 17a *ad sensum* is as follows: "But then in fact I do not do that"<sup>(13)</sup>. The correction of verse 17b states that personified sin is the real culprit. Paul cannot but also explain this second thesis.

Since the "I" knows that nothing good dwells within him, that is, in his flesh, Paul is justified in formulating the new thesis. Yet an explanation must be provided. Verse 18a constitutes a first γάρ clause: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh"<sup>(14)</sup>. A second γάρ clause follows which further explains the first one: "For I can will (what is right), but I cannot do what is right" (v. 18bc). Paul returns to the contrast of "willing" and "doing" of verses 15-16 and, by means of καλόν, he continues with the idea of good (cf. ἀγαθόν in v. 18a and, later, ἀγαθόν-κακόν in v. 19ab). One should note that in verse 18b a concessive nuance is present: it is true (or I admit) that "to wish what is right" lies near me, yet... In v. 19ab a third motivation is added: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want I do". Here Paul substantially reasserts what he already said in verse 15bc.

Just as verse 16, so also verse 20, with its δέ, implies a contrast and consists of a conditional period. The εἰ clause is more or less the same (compare 20a with 16a), but the apodosis differs. Verse 16b refers to verse 14a, verse 20bc is a repetition of verse 17ab. That repetition, however, is not complete (no νυνὶ δέ in 20b); moreover, the logical function of verse 20bc is totally different. Verse 17 is a (second) thesis while verse 20bc is the conclusion which follows from the minor in 20a. To a certain extent, however, verses 17 and 20ab can be called an inclusion. The second round of argumentation is clearly terminated.

\*  
\* \*

Verses 21-23 constitute a resuming conclusion (see in v. 21a ἄρα εὐρίσκω: "So I find"). Does our analysis of verses 15-20 bring about a better understanding of the line of thought? It would seem that some conclusions can be drawn.

a) In verses 15-20 one should distinguish two separate sub-units: vv. 15-16 and vv. 18-20. By means of the first sub-unit Paul motivates the thesis of verse 14b; by means of the second he grounds the thesis of verse 17.

b) The new thesis proves to be different from the first. "I am fleshly, sold into slavery under sin" (v. 14b) becomes a more sophisticated pronouncement: "as a matter of fact it is not I that do the evil, but the indwelling sin" (v. 17). No doubt, there is a progression in the line of thought.

<sup>(12)</sup> The rendering "no longer" should be avoided.

<sup>(13)</sup> Cf. C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh 1975) I, 360: "Both νυνὶ and οὐκέτι are here used in a logical, rather than a temporal, sense; the meaning of the first four words of the verse being 'But, this being so (that is, in the circumstances indicated by v. 16), it is then not I who'".

<sup>(14)</sup> For HOFIUS, "Der Mensch im Schatten Adams", 136, n. 116, the γάρ is "begründend". He renders it by "ja".



c) Consequently the resumption of verses 15b-16a in verses 19a-20a functions differently. In these last verses — as well in the whole of verses 18-20a — one must mentally supply, as it were, the correction that is expressed in verse 17: “it is not I who do it, but it is the sin which dwells within me that does it”.

d) We should not postulate too much parallelism within 7,14-20. Verse 18 as is not a resumption of verse 14<sup>(15)</sup> nor is verse 20 (conditional period) a logical parallel of verses 16 (conditional period) and 17 (thesis) together<sup>(16)</sup>.

We may present the structured text as follows<sup>(17)</sup>:

*First Thesis*

14b ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν·

*Motivations*

- 15 a (1) ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω·  
 b (2) οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω,  
 c ἀλλ’ ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ.

*Inference*

- 16 a εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ,  
 b σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός.

*Second Thesis*

- 17 a νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ  
 b ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκουσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία·

*Motivations*

- 18 a (1) οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν·  
 b (2) τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι,  
 c τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ·  
 19 a (3) οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν,  
 b ἀλλὰ ὁ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω.

*Inference*

- 20 a εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω ἐγὼ τοῦτο ποιῶ,  
 b οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ  
 c ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκουσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.

<sup>(15)</sup> The first person singular οἶδα in v. 18a differs from the first person plural οἶδαμεν in v. 14a. While in v. 14a Paul points to the generally accepted Christian knowledge (the law is spiritual), in v. 18a he refers to the pre-Christian experience of the “I”.

<sup>(16)</sup> Cf. the judicious remarks on Rom 7,14-20 by Th.R. SCHREINER, *Romans* (Baker Exeget. Comm. NT; Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 373-375.

<sup>(17)</sup> So as to indicate the motivating connection a semicolon is placed at the end of a clause which precedes a γάρ: see vv. 14b.15a.17b.18a and 18c.

The line of thought within 7,14b-20 provides us with two rounds of reasoning. Each consist of a thesis, two or three motivations and an inference.

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### SUMMARY

The parallelism between Romans 7,14-17 and 18-20 as it has recently been put forward by O. Hofius is critically examined. It would seem that within this text Paul's reasoning progresses from vv. 14b-16 to 17-20. The thesis of v. 14b ("I am fleshly, sold into the slavery under sin") gives way to the more sophisticated pronouncement of v. 17 ("as a matter of fact it is not I that do the evil, but the indwelling sin"). Each time motivations follow, vv. 15 and 18-19; finally a conclusion is drawn, vv. 16 and 20.

## **The Habits of New Testament Copyists Singular Readings in the Early Fragmentary Papyri of John**

### *1. Singular Readings and the analysis of Scribal Habits*

This study is a somewhat belated sequel to my 1990 article “Some Observations on Early Papyri of the Synoptic Gospels, especially concerning the ‘Scribal Habits’”<sup>(1)</sup>. There I discussed fourteen early papyri of the Synoptic Gospels in terms of their singular readings — readings unique to the particular manuscript — partly in order to assess the important dissertation on this subject by J.R. Royse<sup>(2)</sup>. By analysing the singular readings of the more substantial NT papyri firstly E.C. Colwell and then Royse had made significant advances in our knowledge of the individual scribal habits exhibited in the different manuscripts and also offered some suggestions about generalising rules or principles concerning early Christian scribal behaviour<sup>(3)</sup>. In relation to the individual characteristics of the scribes, for example, Colwell showed that the scribe of P<sup>66</sup> was undisciplined and sloppy (copying syllables; with a high proportion of nonsense readings and variant spellings; although under the overall control of a second text or reader); the scribe of P<sup>45</sup> was free and concerned with communicating the meaning of text, favouring concision and brevity (copying phrases and clauses); and that the scribe of P<sup>75</sup> intended to be a careful and accurate reproduction (copying letters one by one), favouring clarity and style<sup>(4)</sup>.

On more general matters Colwell showed that irregularities in spelling are the most prominent cause of singular readings (although this may be partly due to the fact that such variations are not always cited in the editions); and that harmonisation to the immediate context occurs far more often than harmonisation to remote parallels (i.e. in the gospels).

Royse’s dissertation generally supported Colwell’s results and extended

<sup>(1)</sup> *Bib* 71 (1990) 240–247.

<sup>(2)</sup> J.R. ROYSE, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (ThD, Graduate Theological Union; UMI 1981); a summary was published: J. R. ROYSE, “Scribal Habits in the Transmission of New Testament Texts”, *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts* (ed. W.D. O’FLAHERTY) (Berkeley 1979) 139–161; more generally: J.R. ROYSE, “Scribal Tendencies in the Transmission of the Text”, *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research. Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. Festschrift B.M. Metzger (eds. B.D. EHRMAN – M.W. HOLMES) (SD 46; Grand Rapids 1995) 239–252.

<sup>(3)</sup> It is worth noting that although different methods are favoured by different textual critics — radical or thoroughgoing eclecticism, the so-called reasoned eclecticism and the more strictly documentary or genealogical methods — they all agree on the importance of transcriptional probabilities concerning how a scribe might be presumed to have behaved, that is the “scribal habits” of the era under discussion.

<sup>(4)</sup> E.C. COLWELL, “Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text”, *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* (ed J.P. HYATT) (Nashville 1965) 370–389; republished as “Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, P<sup>75</sup>”, *id.*, *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (NTTS IX; Leiden 1969) 106–124.

the analysis to the three other major papyri: the scribe of P<sup>46</sup> was rather error-prone and often confused similar sounds and abbreviations in his exemplar, he often harmonised to the context and regularly omitted material (although 160 corrections suggest that it was a controlled situation); the scribe of P<sup>47</sup> exhibits numerous spelling errors, frequent omissions often due to scribal leaps, harmonisation to context, and a tendency to grammatical and stylistic improvements. P<sup>72</sup> had a careless scribe with very irregular spelling, a habit of omitting one word at a time; and a theological interest in the deity of Christ<sup>(5)</sup>.

On more general matters Royse concluded that the commonest form of corruption was harmonisation, normally to the immediate context; stylistic and grammatical improvements and transpositions were also frequently found. His conclusions came to a pronounced focus on the consistent habitual omission of material: "the fact is that the six papyri studied here all demonstrate a tendency to shorten the text"<sup>(6)</sup>. This conclusion was at odds with the old rule "prefer the shorter reading".

In my earlier study similar tendencies were observed among the early papyri of the synoptic gospels: most singular readings concerned spelling, particularly place and personal names; harmonisation both to immediate context and to synoptic parallels were found, as well as frequent transpositions of word order<sup>(7)</sup>. Omission was more common than addition of material. In general this supported Royse's conclusions, drawn, as we have already mentioned, from a much larger study<sup>(8)</sup>.

My own brief study has been relatively well received with an important qualification which has implications for the method used in this article. In several places I was not sufficiently rigorous in proving the singularity of a reading with the result that some readings were inappropriately included<sup>(9)</sup>. In order to be clearer in this study I shall take a singular reading to be one that is not known from NA<sup>27</sup>, Tischendorf<sup>8</sup>, von Soden and Swanson<sup>(10)</sup>. We have not invoked the category of readings that might be described as sub-singular

<sup>(5)</sup> ROYSE, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, 282-283, 360, 488 for the respective summaries.

<sup>(6)</sup> ROYSE, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, 601-602.

<sup>(7)</sup> HEAD, "Some Observations on Early Papyri of the Synoptic Gospels", 246.

<sup>(8)</sup> ROYSE accepted that "A subsequent study by Peter M. Head has given yet further confirmation of this view [i.e. the tendency to omit]", in "Scribal Tendencies in the Transmission of the Text", 246. The connection with Royse's fuller study relativises Birdsall's critique that it is impossible to draw such broad general conclusions from such a brief survey, see J.N. BIRDSALL, "A note on the textual evidence for the omission of Matthew 9:34", *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*. The Second Durham Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism (Durham, September, 1989) (ed J.D.G. DUNN) (WUNT 66; Tübingen 1992) 117-122, on pp. 121-122.

<sup>(9)</sup> ROYSE, "Scribal Tendencies in the Transmission of the Text", 247, n. 51.

<sup>(10)</sup> C. TISCHENDORF, *Novum Testamentum Graece: ad antiquissimos testes denuo recensuit apparatus criticum omni studio perfectum apposuit Commentationem Isagogicam praetexuit Constantinus Tischendorf. Editio octava critica maior. Vol 1: Matt, Mark, Luke, John* (Lipsiae, 1869); H.F. VON SODEN, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte. Text und Apparat* (Göttingen, 1913 [Sonderausgabe]); R. SWANSON (ed.), *New Testament Greek Manuscripts. Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus. John* (Sheffield – Pasadena, CA 1995).

(that is readings that are probably due to the scribe, but are also represented in one or two non-related sources).

This study examines the singular readings in the papyrus manuscripts of John's Gospel that can be dated with some confidence to the fourth century or earlier. Clear singular readings from each manuscript will be noted; singular readings deduced on the basis of what a fragmentary text reveals about line length will be noted as a special category, but will be credited for our purposes only when the reconstruction of the original editor is confirmed by subsequent scholarship. In this study (unlike the earlier one), I shall investigate the manuscripts in something that approximates to chronological order (depending not on a full independent analysis, but on consensual positions). Our task has been made simpler by the publication of the Johannine papyri (at least those which were then available) by W.J. Elliott and D.C. Parker for the *International Greek New Testament Project*<sup>(11)</sup>. This includes twelve manuscripts from the fourth century or earlier. More recently four new manuscripts of John from Oxyrhynchus have been published by W.H. Cockle<sup>(12)</sup>. We thus have sixteen early papyri of John's Gospel. The three most extensive of these — P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>66</sup> & P<sup>75</sup> — have already been treated generally by both Colwell and Royse and are therefore not discussed here (with the exception of two leaves of John in P<sup>45</sup> and two newly identified portions of P<sup>66</sup> which were published subsequent to these earlier studies). That leaves thirteen other fragmentary texts, which have not previously been studied in relation to their scribal habits, which will be the focus of our study (three of these manuscripts close to our upper temporal limit — P<sup>22</sup>, P<sup>39</sup> and P<sup>80</sup> — contain no singular readings and are simply noted at the appropriate chronological point).

## 2. Singular Readings in the early Johannine Papyri

P<sup>52</sup> (Manchester, Rylands Library, Gr. P. 457) is normally dated to the first half of the second century. It is in fact a very small fragment, consisting of the top corner of one leaf of a codex with portions of 18,31-33 on one side and of 18,37-38 on the other. The scribe exhibits a tendency to leave slight gaps between words, and may, on one occasion, have corrected his text by over-writing (the epsilon in ἀληθείας in 18,37; verso line 3). In two places we find singular readings involving εἰ/ι variation: ημεῖς (recto line 1; 18,31); ἰσ[η]λθεν (recto, line 4; 18,33). C.H. Roberts, supported by Elliott & Parker, also asserted that for reasons of space, εἰς τοῦτο must have been omitted at the second occurrence of the phrase in 18,37 (from verso, line 1) — with εἰς τοῦτο the line would be 39 letters long, compared with an average of

<sup>(11)</sup> *The New Testament in Greek IV. The Gospel According to St. John. The Papyri* (eds. W.J. ELLIOTT – D.C. PARKER) (NTTS XX; Leiden 1995) which includes the Johannine material up to P<sup>95</sup> (including a taxonomy of proposed dates, pp. 17-18). This includes plates of all the twenty-two papyrus manuscripts with portions of John (although only samples of P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup>), and attempted to give enough information so that it would be able "to contribute to our knowledge of scribal practice" (p. 5).

<sup>(12)</sup> *OxyPap LXV* (ed. M.W. HASLAM *et al.*) (London 1998); *P. Oxy 4445-4448* on pp. 10-20 (ed. W.E.H. COCKLE). On these and other new material see P.M. HEAD, "Some Recently Published NT Papyri from Oxyrhynchus: An Overview and Preliminary Assessment", *TynB* 51 (2000) 1-16.

thirty<sup>(13)</sup>. This would involve a singular omission of two arguably redundant words.

*P*<sup>90</sup> (P. Oxy 2523; Oxford, Ashmolean) consists of part of a full page (with extant margins at the top and bottom as well as one side) from a papyrus codex of the second half of the second century that coincidentally covers the same portion of text as *P*<sup>52</sup>— John 18,36–19,7. In terms of singular readings we note one εἰ variation: ὑμεῖν in recto, line 18; 18,39<sup>[2]</sup><sup>(14)</sup>, the spelling of ἐκράξαν in 19,6 (verso, line 17: probably a nonsense reading for ἐκράξαν, as 01\*) and a transposed word order involving σὺ εἰ in 18,37 (recto, line 6). At 19,6 *P*<sup>90</sup> lacks the second σταυρῶσον (an omission shared with *P*<sup>66\*</sup> 054<sup>c</sup> 1010 it<sup>a</sup> c<sup>r1</sup>) combined with the addition of αὐτον (shared with *P*<sup>60(vid)</sup> 01 A D<sup>supp</sup> Θ 054 f<sup>13</sup> *Maj.*) which results in a singular combination of two shared variants (although neither individual reading is singular).

*P*<sup>66</sup> (Geneva, P. Bodmer II) comprises substantial portions of John 1–21 from around 200, if not earlier. Although its singular readings were studied by Colwell and listed by Royse, one subsequently published fragment and fresh identifications of unidentified fragments add some additional evidence, which for the sake of completeness, we note here. The new portion (Köln, Univ.: Institut für Altertumskunde, Inv. Nr. 4274/4298) provides evidence for four consecutive pages from the inside of the penultimate quire (pp. 135-8: John 19,8-11.13-15.18-20.23-24)<sup>(15)</sup>. Here we find one singular omission of σὺ (19,9) and clear confirmation of the singular addition of λεγ|ομενου (19,13 already noted by Royse, following Martin's transcription, as *P*<sup>66(vid)</sup>)<sup>(16)</sup>. Among the identifications that may be regarded as certain we note the singular word order καὶ ὁ ἀπὸ αὐτον (20,15)<sup>(17)</sup>.

*P*<sup>95</sup> (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana PL II/31) is a small fragment of John 5,26-29.36-38 dated by the editor early in the third century<sup>(18)</sup>. A singular reading occurs at 5,28 (recto, line 7) with ἀκουσαντ|ες (other forms of the same verb are attested in other manuscripts at this point). This may be a harmonisation to context (the same participle occurs in v. 26)<sup>(19)</sup>. Two other singular readings have been suggested for material which is not extant: firstly either additional words or a complex transposition is needed in the first line

<sup>(13)</sup> *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester. Volume III: Theological and Literary Texts (No3. 457-551)* (ed. C.H. ROBERTS) (Manchester 1938) 3; ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 72.

<sup>(14)</sup> T.C. SKEAT, the editor, also suggested ὑμεῖν in recto, line 17; *OxyPap L* (1983) 3-8; but the epsilon has not been confirmed by subsequent viewers, cf. ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 116 who read ὑμ|ιν (which my own viewing confirms).

<sup>(15)</sup> M. GRONWALD, "Johannes-evangelium, Kap. 19,8-11.13-15.18-20.23-24, Kölner Papyri 5", *PapyCol* 7 (1985) 73-76, 296-298.

<sup>(16)</sup> ROYSE, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, 389; cf. V. MARTIN – J.W.B. BARNES, *Papyrus Bodmer II, Supplément Evangile de Jean, 14-21* (Geneva 1962) 36.

<sup>(17)</sup> K. ALAND, "Neue neutestamentliche Papyri III", *NTS* 20 (1974) 357-381, on p. 378 re fragment 2 = 20.15-16/19.

<sup>(18)</sup> J. LENAERTS, "Un papyrus de l'Évangile de Jean: PL II/31", *CÉg LX* (1985) 117-120.

<sup>(19)</sup> Minuscule 579 reprises v. 25 at the end of v. 28 by adding καὶ οἱ ἀκουσαντες ζήσουσιν (SWANSON, *John*, 61).

of the recto (5,27) to fill up the space available — Elliott & Parter suggest  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\ \tau\omega\ \upsilon\omega$  (a singular addition), while Lenaerts declined to offer a suggestion; secondly Elliott & Parker suggest the omission of  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$  in line two of the recto (5,27), where Lenaerts thought the space was sufficient for the pronoun<sup>(20)</sup>. In this regard there is not agreement between the original editor and Elliott & Parker, and the fragment is hardly large enough to build up a consistent picture of line length, so we cannot have confidence that these are true singular readings.

*P*<sup>106</sup> (P. Oxy 4445; Oxford, Ashmolean) is the top portion of a single leaf from a codex of John from the first half of the third century containing the text of John 1,29-35.40-46 (with page numbers 3 and 4 in the upper margin). The fragment is both stained and damaged in various places, making it rather difficult to read. A number of singular readings are evident. At 1,33 (p. 3, line 16) this manuscript reads  $\epsilon\alpha\nu$  in place of  $\alpha\nu$  (a singular substitution); at 1,40 (p. 4, lines 3-4) the most likely reconstruction suggests that  $\eta\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$  was read rather than the participle  $\eta\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\omega\nu$ <sup>(21)</sup>. In 1,41 (p. 4, line 4)  $\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  is omitted (a singular omission of a potentially redundant term)<sup>(22)</sup>; and in 1,42 (p. 4, line 8) the definite article  $\tau\omicron\nu$  (before  $\text{I}\eta\varsigma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\upsilon\nu$ ) is also omitted.

*P*<sup>107</sup> (P. Oxy 4446; Oxford, Ashmolean) is a small fragment from a codex page, containing a portion of John 17,1-2.11, which has been ascribed to the third century. The fragmentary nature of the surviving text precludes certainty about all the proposed readings, and there appears to be only one certain singular reading:  $\text{I}\nu\alpha\ \kappa[\alpha\ \omicron\upsilon\ \upsilon\zeta\ \delta]\omicron\chi[\alpha\sigma\eta\ \sigma\epsilon$  at 17,1. The singularity does not consist of either addition (since other witnesses also include the  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  — although note that all of these also include  $\sigma\omicron\upsilon$  after  $\text{v}\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ) or omission (since other witnesses also lack  $\sigma\omicron\upsilon$  after  $\text{v}\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ) but in the resulting singularity compared with the three other versions of the phrases attested in the manuscripts (i.e.  $\text{I}\nu\alpha\ \omicron\ \text{v}\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\omicron\chi\alpha\sigma\eta\ \sigma\epsilon$  01 B C\* etc. [NA<sup>27</sup>],  $\text{I}\nu\alpha\ \omicron\ \text{v}\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\omicron\chi\alpha\sigma\eta\ \sigma\epsilon$  A D  $\Theta$  etc.,  $\text{I}\nu\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \omicron\ \text{v}\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\omicron\chi\alpha\sigma\eta\ \sigma\epsilon$  C<sup>(2),3</sup> L  $\Psi$  f<sup>13</sup> 33 *Maj.*).

*P*<sup>108</sup> (P. Oxy 4447; Oxford, Ashmolean) consists of two adjoining fragments providing evidence for the bottom half of a codex page, from the third century, containing John 17,23-24; 18,1-5. The only singular reading is the itacistic spelling variation of  $\gamma\epsilon\iota\nu[\omega\sigma\kappa\eta$  at 17,23 (verso, line 5).

*P*<sup>109</sup> (P. Oxy 4448; Oxford, Ashmolean) is another small fragment from a third century codex page containing John 21,18-20.23-25. There is no certain singular reading, although Cockle proposes a singular version of 21,18:  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota\ \zeta\omega\sigma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \omicron\iota\sigma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\ \sigma\epsilon$  to account for the traces and spaces extant on the rather obscured recto, lines 2-3<sup>(23)</sup>.

*P*<sup>45</sup> (Dublin, P. Chester Beatty I) was originally a codex of around 220 leaves containing the four gospels and Acts, from around the middle of the third century (although John was represented only by three fragmentary leaves representing John 10,7-25.29-11,11 and 11,17-37.42-57). In 1991

<sup>(20)</sup> ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 120.

<sup>(21)</sup> For this see COCKLE, *OxyPap LXV*, 13.

<sup>(22)</sup> Cockle notes that a single Old Latin manuscript e omits *hic* (*OxyPap LXV*, 14).

<sup>(23)</sup> COCKLE, *OxyPap LXV*, 20.

some additional fragments of this manuscript were published providing text from John 4,51-52; 5,21-25<sup>(24)</sup>. Although the fragments are small, two singular readings are found. First, the omission of αὐτῷ (4,52; frag b recto, line 3); second the reading ἐδ[ῶκε for δεδῶκε (at 5,22, frag b verso, line 3): an aorist for the perfect (possibly harmony with 5,26-27?).

P<sup>s</sup> (P. Oxy 208, 1781; London, BL Inv 782, 2484) comprises two fragments of a late third century codex. The first fragment contains portions of John 1,23-31.33-41 and 20,11-17.19-25 (it is probably the penultimate sheet of a codex containing John's Gospel in a single quire). The second fragment contains portions of John 16,14-30. There is no doubt that these come from the same original document. The rounded upright uncial is clear and strong. The scribe uses *nomina sacra* (although not for *anthropos*), has a tendency to leave small spaces between words and definite spaces for punctuation purposes, and rough breathings. Particularly characteristic are a number of corrections or alternative readings added to the text, possibly by the original scribe (or possibly made by a *diorthotes* practically contemporary with the original scribe).

At fol. 1, recto, line 15 (John 1,38): the scribe initially omitted οἱ δε and has then written these letters above the line (above a longish space reflecting a natural pause in the syntax before εἰπὼν). Although this singular omission was corrected (probably by the original scribe) it is clearly an acceptable indication of the habits of this scribe, albeit of a different character to uncorrected singular readings.

Three singular readings occur in the second fragment of this manuscript (P. Oxy 1781). The first two involve spelling variants. At recto, line 20 (John 16,20) for λυπηθησεσθε this text reads λουπηθη[σεσθε (it is likely that the scribe originally wrote λουπ before crossing through the omicron and changing the iota into an upsilon). At recto, line 22 (John 16,21) instead of λυπην this text reads λου[πην (a correction subsequently added an upsilon). These two similar singular readings may have arisen through an idiosyncratic pronunciation.

A major omission from John 16,23-24 occurred at verso line 8 where the scribe omitted ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι μου εἰς ἅρτι οὐκ ἠτήσατε οὐδὲν. This is most plausibly attributed to confusion caused by the repetition of ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι μου at either the beginning of successive lines in his exemplar (*homoioarcton*) or at the end of successive lines (*homoeoteleuton*). These words were subsequently incorporated in a correction that was added at the bottom of the page (possibly by a different hand)<sup>(25)</sup>. At verso line 20 (16,27) this text singularly omits ἐγώ. At line 2 of the second folio of the verso of the first fragment (i.e. P. Oxy 208; John 20,19 the scribe has omitted καὶ<sup>[3]</sup> and subsequently added this word above the line. This is another example of a singular omission that has been subsequently corrected.

In addition to these readings a number of other singular readings may be

<sup>(24)</sup> T.C. SKEAT – B.C. MCGING, "Notes on Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus I (Gospels and Acts)", *Her.* 150 (1991) 21-25. ELLIOTT – PARKER also provide photographs and a transcription in *John. The Papyri*.

<sup>(25)</sup> B.P. GRENFELL – A.S. HUNT, *OxyPap XV* (1922) 12.



deduced from the length of lines in the manuscript<sup>(26)</sup>. One word missing: At fol. 1, recto, line 12 there appears to be insufficient space for the *αυτου* of John 1,37 (after *μαθηται*): this would require a line length of 32 letters, whereas a line with 27 letters is already at the long end of the possible range<sup>(27)</sup>. A substitution: At line 19 of the second folio of the recto of the first fragment (P. Oxy 208) the editors all agree that the space is insufficient for *ο λεγεται διδασκαλε* (John 20,16) and have suggested *ο λεγεται κε [κυριε]* (which would be much neater in terms of space)<sup>(28)</sup>.

Two other singular readings have been suggested, but neither seems very secure. At fol. 1, recto, line 22 (P. Oxy 208) there is insufficient space for *α[δελφος Σιμωνος Πετρου εις εκ των δ]υο* (John 1,40), which would require 28 letters in the missing space (or 33 letters for the line). Since *των* is omitted in several other manuscripts (01 C) it is probably not necessary to presuppose a singular omission of some other word; on the other hand Elliott & Parker think the space requires the omission of another word, most likely *Πετρου* (which would be a singular omission)<sup>(29)</sup>. At line 7 of the recto of the second fragment (POxy 1781; John 16,17) there appears to be extra space which would require some additional material. The text of NA<sup>27</sup>, *ουν εκ των μ[αθητων]*, offers only 9 letters to fill a space proportionally available to about 15 letters. Elliott & Parker introduce *ειπ[ων]* from the preceding line (despite the evidence of final *nu* which can be seen in the photograph and is given, in my view correctly in the *editio princeps*). This suggests that our scribe may have added a word singularly or may have made some other error in this section.

In summary, therefore, the singular readings of this manuscript include two singular omissions of single words, another of two words, and another of nine words (although all but a single word omission were subsequently corrected), along with two singular spellings. Further evidence of probable omissions is present in material that is not actually extant but where the reconstruction is agreed by two different editors are: one case of the omission of a single word; and one case of the substitution of a new word in place of another. We could note that Grenfell & Hunt had already rightly noted the “tendency to brevity, especially in omitting unnecessary pronouns, conjunctions, etc.”<sup>(30)</sup>.

P<sup>22</sup> (P. Oxy 1228; Glasgow, UL MS General 1026/13) consists of two fragments from the top of two consecutive columns of a roll (the recto is

<sup>(26)</sup> At fol. 1, verso, line 5 there is insufficient space for all the introductory material in John 1,25. Between line 5 (*και ηρω[...]*) and line 6 (*...ιπτιζεις*) there is space for 15-20 letters while the text of NA<sup>27</sup>, reflecting the manuscript tradition, contains 29 letters. The suggestion of Grenfell & Hunt, the original editors, that P<sup>2</sup> lacked *και ειπ[ων] αυτω* (12 letters), remains the most plausible solution, *OxyPap II* (1899) 6; supported by ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 28. This is not, however, a singular omission since the same words are omitted in minuscule 251 (according to Von Soden).

<sup>(27)</sup> So GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap II* (1899) 7; supported by ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 29.

<sup>(28)</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap II* (1899) 7; supported by ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 34. Codex Bezae has *ο λεγεται κυριε διδασκαλε*.

<sup>(29)</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap II* (1899) 7; cf. ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 29.

<sup>(30)</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap II* (1899) 9.

blank at this point); no beginnings or ends of lines are visible, and the second fragment is considerably damaged after the first eight lines. It is normally dated to the end of the third century and contains John 15.25–16.2, 21–32. There are no singular readings in the extant text.

*P*<sup>28</sup> (P. Oxy 1596; Berkeley, Pacific School of Religion, Palestine Institute, Pap. 2) consists of the lower part of a single leaf (10.7 × 5.2 cm.) containing John 6.8–12.17–22, and was found with other documents of third-fourth century. Grenfell & Hunt noted that the text was “not very correctly spelled”<sup>(31)</sup>; and this manuscript has five singular readings reflecting spelling variations. In terms of spelling we find the following: πεντακισχιλαιοι (recto line 7, at 6,10), which is a common enough confusion; ελεβεν (recto line 7, at 6,11): cf. ελαβεν, which seems like nonsense, but which could conceivably be a confusion caused by pronunciation; ενγυς (verso line 7, at 6,19): cf. εγγυς, which clearly is a spelling which reflects pronunciation; φοβεισθαι (recto line 9, at 6,20): cf. φοβεισθε, a common error also related to pronunciation; ιδεν (recto line 13, at 6,22): cf. variants (for ειδεν with 01 D lat), also probably due to pronunciation.

Both the original editors and Elliott & Parker agree in a further singular reading involving the omission of του (before Ιησουν) at verso, line 6 (6,19), there not being sufficient space for it to the left of the nu which is extant<sup>(32)</sup>. Both the original editors and Elliott & Parker also agree on the need for a singular omission at verso line 2 (6,17), which would otherwise be an unusually long line. They do not, however, agree on what is proposed: Grenfell & Hunt suggested that *P*<sup>28</sup> might follow the word order: και ουπω προς αυτους εληλυθει ο τς (with *P*<sup>75</sup> B N Y 579), but have the shorter ου in place of ουπω; while Elliott & Parker propose a larger singular omission of προς αυτους<sup>(33)</sup>.

*P*<sup>39</sup> (P. Oxy 1780; formerly: Rochester, Ambrose Swasey Library, Inv. 8864; sold June 2003, current location unknown) contains one side of a whole leaf from a papyrus codex, of perhaps late in the third century, in handsome and spacious layout, with pagination numbering 74 on the recto (text: John 8,14–22). There are no singular readings. Nor are there any singular readings in *P*<sup>80</sup>, which in any case only contains a small portion of John 3,34 (III–IV or perhaps later).

*P*<sup>6</sup> (Strasbourg, Bibl. Nat. & Univ., Pap. Copt. 379, 381–382, 384) perhaps barely warrants treatment here on the basis of its date (some scholars date it as late as VII–VIII; Rösch, the original editor, suggested V; but Aland has given IV in the *Liste*); and its general type: it is a bilingual text with alternating portions of Coptic and Greek (Greek text: John 10,1–2.4–7.9–10; 11,1–8.45–52). It is also somewhat out of character in terms of its singular readings, which consist of the following: at first page, line 17–18 (John 10,5)

<sup>(31)</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap XIII* (1919) 8.

<sup>(32)</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap XIII* (1919) 9; supported by ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 45.

<sup>(33)</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT, *OxyPap XIII* (1919) 9, 10; cf. ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 45.

we find the singular word order τ[ην φωνην των αλλο]τριων<sup>(34)</sup>; on line 20 (John 10,6) we read τι ην α (cf. τινα ην α; P<sup>66</sup> has τι, corrected with να ην α); on line 28 (John 10,10) we have a singular addition: δε (between ο and κλεπτης); on the second page, line 9 (John 11,1) we have another singular addition of εκε[ι]; in line 12 we find an unusual spelling of Mariam (John 11,2), using a Coptic letter: μαριθα[μ]; finally at line 23 evidence supports the addition of two words at 11,5: την μ[αριαμ], this addition is found in other manuscripts, but the resulting reconstructed word order here is singular: της μαρθαν και την μαριαμ την αδελφην αυτης<sup>(35)</sup>.

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If we simply collect the various singular readings that we have discussed in the main section of this paper we would find that spelling variations account for the vast bulk of singular readings: thirteen in all (most of these variations are probably due to pronunciation). In four places we found singular transpositions of word order (involving two, three, four and eight words). In general, omission was more common than addition with seven separate omissions totalling seventeen words (6 × one word, 1 × two words, 1 × nine words [although again we should note that the two latter omissions were corrected]); indeed the only singular additions, of two words in total (2 × one word) occurred in one manuscript, a late bilingual text. We also found four examples of word substitution or the use of a different form of a verb, in two of these cases harmonisation to context was suggested. Two cases of complex singularities, or singularities arising from a new combination of otherwise attested readings were also noted.

Taking further account of non-extant material that has to be calculated on the basis of line length, on which both Elliott & Parker and the original editor agreed, we collected four further examples of singular omissions amounting to 4 words in total (2 × one word, two words) and a single word substitution. Granted the agreement between the editors, and the fact that we have not here included several more examples which only one editor suggested, these are highly probable, if not certain, and they are in line with the more secure results just summarised.

Broadly speaking these results serve to confirm the picture presented in our previous study of the early manuscripts of the synoptic gospels, and thus serve as further confirmation of the much fuller study of Royse. Some categories are not invoked (e.g. harmonisation to a parallel text in another gospel), and this may reflect a peculiarity of the transmission of John's

<sup>(34)</sup> Following here ELLIOTT – PARKER, *John. The Papyri*, 36 (on the basis of their plate 6 — NB the relevant fragment is upside down!), against F. RÖSCH who recorded τη[ν φωνην των αλλο]τριων (*Bruchstücke des ersten Clemensbriefes nach dem achmimischen Papyrus der Strassburger Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek mit biblischen Texten derselben Handschrift* [Strassburg 1910] 119). It is possible that the original revealed more than the photographs, but the reading is sufficiently established by the presence of τριων at the beginning of the following line.

<sup>(35)</sup> Rösch and Elliott & Parker agree on all these readings; cf. also SWANSON, *John*, 152.

gospel, if not simply the limited evidence surveyed here. Once again it seems that the evidence suggests that most early scribes are more likely to omit than to add material.

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#### SUMMARY

After an introduction that discusses the role that singular readings have played in the analysis of scribal habits, including an earlier study of synoptic gospel manuscripts by the same author, this study examines singular readings in the early fragmentary papyri of John's Gospel. The study confirms earlier research showing that the most common singular readings concern spelling and that word order variations, word substitutions and harmonisations to context are also not uncommon. Omission of words is more common than addition.

## He Has Given to the Son To Have Life in Himself (John 5,26)

It could well be argued that John 5,19-30 presents, in condensed form, some of the central convictions of Johannine Christology. In v. 20, Jesus explains that the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself does. In vv. 21-22, Jesus explains specifically that he has been given the power to give life and the power to judge, the two powers that are most characteristic of God the Father himself<sup>(1)</sup>. Then in v. 26, Jesus explains the specific basis for his power to give life:

ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ἔδωκεν  
ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ.

(For just as the Father has life in himself, so he gave the Son the power to have life in himself.)

But just what does it mean to say that Jesus has life “in himself” (ἐν ἑαυτῷ)<sup>(2)</sup>?

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As far as I am aware, up to this time scholars have only been able to speculate, on the basis of the verse’s inner logic, that having life “in oneself” is a special property of God since it is said that just as the Father has life “in himself”, so he gives it to the Son to have “in himself”<sup>(3)</sup>. Schnackenburg<sup>(4)</sup> expresses this possibility when he comments that “the Son has life fully in himself and therefore is a source of life for those who believe (cf 7,37). Believers have life, but not in the same original fullness and power as the Son has life ‘in himself’”. But Schnackenburg gives no evidence for this view other than the verse itself.

Earlier Bultmann<sup>(5)</sup> had taken a somewhat different view and contrasted the believer who has life “in” Jesus with Jesus and the Father who have life “in themselves”. Bultmann supported his contention by appeal to 3,16 and 20,31. Although this contrast is appealing, it is not borne out by the texts cited by Bultmann. Neither text actually describes the source of the life of the believer as “in him [Jesus]”. 3,16 speaks of one “believing in him” (Jesus) and in the case of 20,31 refers to one believing “in his name”.

<sup>(1)</sup> It is often suggested that the section has undergone editing, particularly in vv. 27-29, but no attempt is made here to discuss that possibility since, even if editing is present, the meaning of v. 26 itself is not affected.

<sup>(2)</sup> It should be noted that the same phrase appears associated with the believer in 6,53, but there it clearly does not have the same meaning but is simply a pleonasm that the believer who does not eat the flesh and drink the blood does not have life (i.e. “in themselves”).

<sup>(3)</sup> That the Father was thought to be the source of all life is well attested in the Jewish scriptures (e.g. Deut 32,39; 1 Sam 2,6; 2 Kgs 5,7) and in the NT (e.g. Rom 4,17; 8,11).

<sup>(4)</sup> R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel according to St. John* (New York 1980) II, 112.

<sup>(5)</sup> R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*. A Commentary (Philadelphia 1970) 260-261.

Brown in his commentary does not address the issue; nor do most other scholars<sup>(6)</sup>. S. Schultz attempted to associate the ability to give life in general with apocalyptic literature<sup>(7)</sup> but this is rejected by Beasley-Murray who attempts to link the general ability to give life and judge with his stature as Son of Man and with the synoptic picture of Jesus as the Son of Man<sup>(8)</sup>.

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Because this conception of having life “in oneself” is so central to the Christology of the gospel, positive evidence that would confirm the meaning of the phrase or which would provide confirmation of the larger conceptual framework within which that notion normally operated would seem to be valuable for understanding John 5,26.

However it seems that, in the Wisdom of Solomon, there is just such a statement that provides positive evidence confirming what has been before only speculation regarding the conceptual framework out of which John 5,26 emerges. The author, discussing idolatry (15,16-17), explains the futility of such man-made gods:

ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς. καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα δεδανεισμένος  
ἐπλασεν αὐτούς· οὐδεὶς γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅμοιον ἄνθρωπος ἰσχύει πλάσαι  
θεόν· θνητὸς δὲ ὢν νεκρὸν ἐργάζεται χερσὶν ἀνόμοις.

For a human made them, and one whose spirit had been lent to him made them. For no person is able to make a God like himself. For being mortal, he makes only a dead person with his lawless hands<sup>(9)</sup>.

Here we learn something, not about God’s ability to give life, but why someone who is human cannot. A human is mortal and his spirit has only been “lent” to him. Consequently the person is not able to transfer spirit to something else. What the person makes will only remain dead and lifeless<sup>(10)</sup>.

<sup>(6)</sup> R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29; Garden City 1966) 215.

<sup>(7)</sup> S. SCHULTZ, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4. Göttingen <sup>12</sup>1972) 91; ID., *Untersuchungen zur Menschensohn-Christologie im Johannesevangelium*. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Methodengeschichte der Auslegung des 4. Evangeliums (Göttingen 1957) 111-113.

<sup>(8)</sup> G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John* (WBC 36; Waco 1987) 77.

<sup>(9)</sup> There are a number of textual variants for this verse. The principle variants appear before the word ὅμοιον. C. Larcher, O.P. [*Le Livre de la Sagesse ou la Sagesse de Salomon* (EtB 5; Paris 1985) 882] proposes that the original word before ὅμοιον was ἄνθρώπῳ but early on was abbreviated ἄνῳ. This then gave rise to the principal alternates (αὐτῷ, ἄνθρωπος, ἄνθρώπων, ἀνθρώποις). Yet if this were the case, we would expect the reading ἀνθρώπῳ to have been preserved in at least some manuscripts; but it is not. I have chosen to follow the text of Alexandrinus, the one adopted by Rahlfs [*Septuaginta* (Stuttgart <sup>8</sup>1965)].

<sup>(10)</sup> This notion of an idol being lifeless is echoed in Jer 10,12-14. In those verses, there is a comparison between the work of God in creation who created the earth with his power and founded the world by means of his wisdom. “made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom. But the goldsmiths who make idols are are all put to shame, “for they cast false images; there is no breath in them” (ὅτι ψευδῆ ἐχόνευσαν, οὐκ ἔστιν πνεῦμα ἐν αὐτοῖς).

Of course, the verse speaks of the human “spirit” not “life” but, in the OT conception, it is one’s spirit that is the principle of life. Several OT texts illustrate this belief. Perhaps the most famous is Ezek 37,4-10, where God brings the dry bones to life by the infusion of a spirit. Also Job 34,14-15 says: “For if he (God) were to wish to withdraw and to withhold the spirit (LXX: πνεῦμα) from it, all flesh will perish together”. In 2 Macc 7,22-23 the mother whose seven sons are martyred speaks to them saying: “...it was not I who gave you spirit and life (LXX: τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν). The Creator of the World will give you once again spirit and life (καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν)”. In both these instances, τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν is hendiadys<sup>(11)</sup>. Wis itself also clearly reflects this conception when it speaks of the πνεῦμα given to the human being as a πνεῦμα ζωτικόν, a “life-giving spirit” (15,11).

As a result, it can be seen that Wis 15,16-17 describes a situation which has a significant bearing on the meaning of John 5,26. In John 5,21, it had been said that the Son gives life to those he wishes. In v. 26, Jesus explains that the basis of this is the fact that the Father has life in himself (ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ) and has granted to the Son the power to have life in himself (οὕτως καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ἔδωκεν ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ)<sup>(12)</sup>. Wisdom speaks of the opposite situation and explains that the human cannot transfer life because the individual does not have life “in him/herself”; he/she has a spirit which is only “lent” to the individual<sup>(13)</sup>.

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To conclude, Wis 15,16-17 provides positive evidence of the contemporary Jewish conviction not only about how humans “have” life but also that, because of the way they possess life, they cannot give it to others. Thus the fact the Father has life in himself sets him apart from all humanity. Moreover the fact that the Father gives to the Son to have life in himself not only sets the Son apart and identifies him as divine also but provides the basis for his ability to give life to others. Thus, through the lens of Wis 15,16-18 we are able to understand more clearly one of the central assertions of the

<sup>(11)</sup> See also 2 Macc 14,46 where God is referred to as Lord of life and spirit (δεσπόζων τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος). Other texts which speak of spirit as the principle of life include Ps 103,29-30 LXX [104 Heb]; 145,4 LXX [146 Heb]. See F. BAUMGÄRTEL, “πνεῦμα”, *TDNT*, VI, 359-367; M.C. DE BOER, *The Defeat of Death* (JSNTSS 22; Sheffield 1988) 39-91, esp. 42-47.

<sup>(12)</sup> It is also significant in this regard that in John 3,36 Jesus is said to have the Spirit “without measure”.

<sup>(13)</sup> This view is consistent with that of Wis 15,8, but the intention in each is different. Wis 15,8 speaks of the foolish worker who makes a futile God from the same soil from which he himself had been born only a little time before, and who very soon returns to the same soil from which he was taken, “with the repayment of the debt of his soul” (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀποταθῆις χρέος). While it is true that soul (ψυχή) can be synonymous with spirit (πνεῦμα) (cf the parallelism in v11), and while the impermanence of life is a topic both in v. 8 and vv. 16-17, v8 stresses the similarity between the dirt of which the idol is made and the dirt to which the mortal human has been drawn and will shortly return. What is absent in v. 8 is any discussion of the ability/inability to give life to the idol. It is this latter element of vv. 16-17 which is important for understanding the conceptual background of John 5,26.

discourse of chapter 5 and to establish one more link between the gospel and the Judaism contemporary with it.

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### SUMMARY

John 5,26 explains that Jesus is able to give life because the Father has given him “to have life in himself”. While previously one could surmise the meaning of this special mode of possessing life, Wis 15,16-17 provides positive proof of the verse’s meaning in its comparison of the ways God and humans possess life.



## **The Chronological Framework of the Deuteronomistic History**

The Deuteronomistic History [=DH] was composed in the mid-sixth century BCE. The distinct resemblances in content and form between the Deuteronomistic editing in Joshua–Kings, on the one hand, and in Jeremiah, on the other, may have been the work of a single person, who prepared an extensive composition describing the history of Israel from Moses to Jeremiah. Deuteronomy serves as an introduction to the DH, whereas the Book of Jeremiah concludes it. In Deuteronomy the path was delineated and norms were determined. The main body of Joshua–Kings records the ups and downs in Israel's relationship with God. The epilogue, the Book of Jeremiah, focuses on the destruction of the Temple and the Exile in an attempt to explain the events and inform the exiles of the message of redemption. The Deuteronomist [=Dtr] presents the history of the relationship between Israel and God as intricate and complex, involving sin, repentance, and forgiveness. The message of the DH is one of hope and consolation: the merciful God, who has made an everlasting bond between himself and His elected people, forgave them in the past and he will forgive them in the future. The Exile did not mean the end of relations between God and His people. On the contrary, the Lord will rescue them and return them to their land, at the end of the epoch of the “70 years” (Jer 25,11-12; 29,10)<sup>(1)</sup>.

The Dtr included in the DH a total of approximately 160 numerical chronological data, most of them in the Book of Kings (ca.120). He compiles dozens of chronological data from his sources, to which he obviously attributed great importance. His composition contains information on the reigns of all the kings of Israel and Judah, without exception, including those who ruled only a few days or weeks. He also took pains to mention the synchronisms of all the kings of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms from the schism to the fall of Samaria, and even arranged the Book of Kings in chronological-synchronistic order.

In my previous two books, I studied the historical reliability of the Biblical and external chronological data for the monarchic period, and concluded that approximately 90% of the Biblical and external data could be reconciled by means of a relatively simple set of principles<sup>(2)</sup>. In this article, I would like to reexamine the chronological framework of the DH, and to discuss the correlation between the chronological data in Deuteronomy–

(1) For emphasis on the positive and optimistic message in the DH see G. VON RAD, “Das deuteronomistische Geschichtstheologie in den Königsbücher”, *Deuteronomium Studies*, B (Göttingen 1947) 52-64; H.W. WOLFF, “Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk”, *ZAW* 73 (1961) 171-186; G. GALIL, “The Message of the Book of Kings in relation to Deuteronomy and Jeremiah”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (2001) 406-414, with additional literature.

(2) G. GALIL, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (SHCANE 9; Leiden 1996); *id.*, *Israel and Assyria* (Haifa – Tel Aviv 2001) (Hebrew).

Samuel and the schematic framework in 1 Kgs 6,1, which determines 480 years from the Exodus to the establishment of the Temple<sup>(3)</sup>.

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The chronology of the period from Moses to Samuel and the correlation between the chronological data in Deuteronomy–Samuel and the schematic framework in 1 Kgs 6,1, have been discussed extensively in the literature. Scholars have formulated many hypotheses for the resolution of the complicated chronological problems of this period, without producing any generally accepted solution.

Many scholars are of the opinion that 480 years is a round calculation of a period of 12 generations of 40 years each, based on the Priestly tradition in 1 Chr 5,29-37 [6,1-15], which counted 12 generations from Aaron to Azariah, who served in Solomon's Temple<sup>(4)</sup>. However, this common claim is clearly wrong, for there is not even one evident "Priestly tradition" that numbers precisely 12 generations from Aaron, the first priest, to Azariah, the priest in the time of Solomon. Actually, there are many "Priestly traditions" in 1 Chr 5-6, and in Ezra 7,1-3, and they are self-contradictory. Only one "tradition" mentions explicitly that Azariah, "is the one who served as priest in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem" (1 Chr 5,36 [6,10]). Yet, this "tradition" counted 15, not 12 generations from Aaron to Azariah, who served in Solomon's Temple<sup>(5)</sup>. Other scholars hold that 440 years, read by the LXX for the MT's 480 in 1 Kgs 6,1, should be preferred, and that it is based on eleven generations between Aaron and Zadok, mentioned in 1 Chr 5,29-37 [6,1-15]<sup>(6)</sup>. However, as Rowley rightly pointed out, "there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the author of 1 Kgs 6,1 had access to the Book of Chronicles, or that he had independent knowledge of the High Priestly genealogy"<sup>(7)</sup>.

Other researchers are of the opinion that most of the chronological data in Deuteronomy–Samuel was coordinated with the schematic framework in 1 Kgs 6,1, but their proposals are unconvincing.

<sup>(3)</sup> For the Dtr's chronological framework spanning 400 years from the establishment of the Temple to the fall of Jerusalem, see my article "Dates and Calendars in Kings" (forthcoming).

<sup>(4)</sup> J. WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin 2001 [1927]) 225; A. GAMPERT, "Les '480 ans' de 1 Rois vi, 1", *RThPh* N.S. 5 (1917) 241-247; B. MAZAR, "The Exodus and the Conquest", *The World History of the Jewish People: Judges* (London 1971) I/3, 72; H. TADMOR, "Chronology", *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (Jerusalem 1962) IV, 250-251 (Hebrew); M. COGAN, "Chronology", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York 1992) I, 1005.

<sup>(5)</sup> For the emendation of vv. 9-10 [MT 5,35-36] and the assumption that the first-mentioned Azariah was a priest in the Temple of Solomon see E.D. CURTIS – A.A. MADSEN, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles* (ICC; Edinburgh 1910) 128-129; S. JAPHET, *I and II Chronicles. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY 1993) 150. But even if we accept this common opinion, we still count 13 and not 12 generations from Aaron to Azariah.

<sup>(6)</sup> For this proposal see G. GRAY, *I and II Kings* (OTL; Philadelphia 1970) 159; G.H. JONES, *I and 2 Kings* (NCB; Grand Rapids 1984) 163.

<sup>(7)</sup> H.H. ROWLEY, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London 1950) 95.

Moore (following Nöldeke), excludes from his calculations most of the years of foreign domination, as well as the years of the “usurpers” (Saul and Abimelech), basing his chronological scheme mainly on the tenures of the Israelite leaders of this period<sup>(8)</sup>. He proposes the following figures for the main Israelite leaders of the pre-monarchic period: Moses – 40 years, Joshua – 40, Othniel – 40, Ehud – 80, Barak – 40, Gideon – 40, the Minor Judges with Jephthah – 76, Samson – 20, Eli – 20 (=LXX), Samuel (40). This proposal is clearly mistaken: one cannot claim that the Dtr, on the one hand, composed the theological framework of the book of Judges, and on the other excluded most of the periods of oppression, which are so important and central in the same theological framework.

Noth suggests that the Dtr sums up the whole chronology of the pre-monarchic period in 1 Kgs 6,1<sup>(9)</sup>. In his opinion, the Dtr was extremely and consistently interested in chronological questions, and this is further proof that the Dtr is a single author and his work is self-contained. Noth assumes overlapping figures for the Philistine oppression and late interpolations added by post-deuteronomistic editors. He points out that the Dtr meant to provide an unbroken chronology, and offers the following chronological scheme: 40 years of wandering in the wilderness; five years for the conquest of Cisjordan; Cushan-rishathaim/ Othniel – 48 years; Eglon/Ehud – 98; Jabin/Deborah – 60; Midian/Gideon – 47; Abimelech – 3; Tola and Jair – 45; Ammonite oppression – 18; Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon – 31; Philistine oppression – 40; Saul – 2; David – 40; Solomon – 4 or 3, if Solomon’s first year coincided with David’s last. Noth’s proposals are very problematic, as he himself had noticed. He claims that in two places the Dtr uses an artificial conception in order to reach the total of 480. But in fact, the problem lies with Noth’s proposals not with the Dtr’s system, since Noth omitted the period of Samuel from his calculations, as well as the years of the last stages of Joshua and the elders that outlived him.

Richter proposed another solution<sup>(10)</sup>. He also assumes overlapping figures for the period of the judges (mainly for the time of Samson and Eli), suggesting the following reconstruction of the figure 480 (counting backwards from the establishment of the Temple): 46 years of the reigns of Solomon (4), David (40) and Saul (2); 136 years of “judges in the strict sense” (characterized by the formulae: *וְהָיָה שָׁפֵט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל* or *וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל*): Eli (40), Samson (20), and the “minor Judges” (76); 200 years of the “Savior” judges (characterized by the formula: *וַיִּשְׁקֵט הָאָרֶץ*): Gideon (40), Barak and Deborah (40), Ehud (80) and Othniel (40); 53 years of oppression: before Gideon (7), Deborah (20), Ehud (18), and Othniel (8); 40 years in the desert; and only five years for the period of Joshua and the elders. This proposal, like Noth’s, is untenable, since Richter also omits the period of Samuel, and gives Joshua only five years.

<sup>(8)</sup> G.F. MOORE, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh 1895) xl-xliii.

<sup>(9)</sup> M. NOTH, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSS 15; Sheffield 1981) 18-25, 104-107.

<sup>(10)</sup> W. RICHTER, *Die Bearbeitungen des “Retterbuchs” in der deuteronomischen Epoche* (Bonn 1964) 132-141; see also R.G. BOLING, *Judges* (AB; Garden City, NY 1975) 23.

Moreover, he excluded from his calculations the 58 years of oppression by the Ammonites and the Philistines, and the three years of Abimelech<sup>(11)</sup>.

Moore, Noth, Richter, and other scholars, are of the opinion that the series of the "Minor Judges" with the dates assigned to them totaling 76 years, were included in the DH, and in the schematic framework in 1 Kgs 6,1. This is one of the main flaws in their systems, since, in my opinion, the notices of the minor judges were not included in the deuteronomistic edition of the book of Judges, and therefore cannot form part of the Dtr's chronology or of the schematic framework spanning 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon<sup>(12)</sup>. The notices of the minor judges are clearly secondary in the Book of Judges. They are devoid of any theological aspect: in these passages we find no sin, no repentance, and no forgiveness. Salvation is mentioned, but no salvation stories are related, and even the typical round figures are not mentioned. Moreover, the interpolation of these passages in chapters 10 and 12, evidently contradicts the Dtr's attitude towards the period of the judges, since, in his opinion, the Israelites were on a road downward: "as soon as the judge was dead, they would relapse into deeper corruption than their forefathers" (Judg 2,19). Accordingly, the reaction of the Lord changed: "I will deliver you no more" (Judg 10,13), so there was no more room for prosperity and success, but just for judgment, decline, and oppression. The Dtr divides the epoch of the judges into two main parts: the period of the four saviors, who succeeded in their mission (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Gideon), and the period of the three judges/leaders who disappointed: Abimelech, Jephthah and Samson<sup>(13)</sup>. The period of these last three leaders is described by the Dtr as dark and cruel, without rest or peace, characterized by deep corruption, and one of the lowest points in the relationship between God and his chosen people. This is exactly the point where a post-deuteronomistic editor inserted the notices of the minor judges, in an effort to balance the Dtr's hard and gloomy description of the relations between God and the Israelites: "In the midst of escalating social chaos, the notices of the minor judges serve as a refreshing interludes of order, family growth and prosperity..."<sup>(14)</sup>.

<sup>(11)</sup> For another proposal to coordinate the chronological data in Deuteronomy-Samuel with 1 Kgs 6,1 see G. SAUER, "Die chronologischen Angaben in den Büchern Deuteronomium bis 2. Könige", *TZ* 24 (1968) 1-14. For a critical review of his suggestions see J.J. BIMSON, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (JSOTSS 5; Sheffield 1981) 83-84.

<sup>(12)</sup> For the opinion that the series of the minor judges were added to the Book of Judges by a post-deuteronomistic editor see K. BUDDE, *Das Buch der Richter* (KHAT; Freiburg 1897) ix, xvii, 78; C.F. BURNEY, *The Book of Judges* (New York 1970 [1903]) 289-290; ROWLEY, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 92, 97; C.A. SIMPSON, *Composition of the Book of Judges* (Oxford 1957) 142-145; J. GRAY, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (NCB; London 1967) 5-6, 327; Y. ZAKOVITCH, "The Associative Arrangement of the Book of Judges and its Use for the Recognition of Stages in the Formation of the Book", *Isaac Leo Seeligmann Volume. Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (ed. Y. ZAKOVITCH – A. ROFE) (Jerusalem 1983) I, 180-182 (Hebrew). It is a common opinion that the series of the minor judges have been included in the Book of Judges "simply to supplement the number of the 'great judges' to the conventional number of twelve, thus possibly to make the judges as representative as possible of all the elements of Israel" (GRAY, *Joshua, Judges, 327*).

<sup>(13)</sup> For the "disappointing judges" see Y. AMIT, *The Book of Judges. The Art of Editing* (BIS 38; Leiden 1999) 85-92.

<sup>(14)</sup> C. PRESSLER, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (WBC; Louisville – London 2002) 194.

In the following pages I would like to present my reconstruction of the correlation between the note in 1 Kgs 6,1 and the chronological data in Deuteronomy-Samuel. The discussion will be divided into three main parts: (1) The chronological information relating to the beginning and to the closing of the period from the Exodus to the establishment of the Temple; (2) The chronology of the period from Cushan-rishathaim to the Philistine oppression; (3) The correlation between these two periods.

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It is generally held that the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness lasted 40 years (Deut 1,3; 2,7; 8,2.4; 29,4). The Exodus was the starting point of the DH, and the first 40 years are clearly divided into three main sub-periods: (1) The first year (the Exodus; Horeb; from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea; the spies; the sin and the judgment; back to the desert); (2) 38 years of wandering from Kadesh-barnea to the brook of Zered, “until the whole generation ... had passed away” (Deut 2,14); (3) The last year (“the fortieth year”): the conquest of Transjordan; the last speech of Moses, at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> month (Deut 1,3); and the death of Moses, at the age of 120 (Deut 31,2; 34,7). The chronology of the final period of the schematic framework of 480 years is similarly also clear: the Dtr assigns David a reign of 40 years (1 Kgs 2,11, cf. 2 Sam 5,4-5), and the Temple was established in the fourth year of Solomon. It is mentioned explicitly that Solomon was crowned while David was still alive. This clear co-regency is very important for understanding of the Dtr’s chronology of the monarchic period. In my opinion, the Dtr has no doubt used the postdating system for the reigns of the Kings of the house of David, as was evidently the custom in the last years of Judah, a period with which he personally was closely familiar. It is reasonable to suppose that the Dtr considered the last year of David as the accession-year of Solomon, suggesting a few months of co-regency.

The figure given for Saul’s reign in 1 Sam 13,1 (“two years”), is evidently too low to be historically possible. It is generally considered to be a textual corruption<sup>(15)</sup>. Still, in my opinion, the Dtr found this date in his sources, which were written by scribes related to the house of David. These scribes intended to present Saul’s reign as a very brief and unsuccessful episode, between the glorious days of Samuel, on the one hand, and the climax in the reign of David, on the other hand. This brings the final period of the 480 years to a total of 46 years (see table).

The “period of the judges” described in the deuteronomistic edition of the Book of Judges, lasted 314 years, 200 years of peace, 111 years of oppression by a foreign enemy, and the three years of Abimelech. This period is divided into seven sub-periods by a pattern of four and three, as follows: four full theological cycles may be observed in chapters 3–8: (1) The first cycle lasted

<sup>(15)</sup> For the chronological note in 1 Sam 13,1 see H.W. HERTZBERG, *I and II Samuel* (OTL; London 1964) 103; R.W. KLEIN, *I Samuel* (WBC 10; Waco, TX 1983) 122-125; V.P. LONG, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul. A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (SBLDS 118; Atlanta, GA 1989) 71-75.

48 years: from the first period of sin and the subsequent oppression by Cushan-rishathain, which lasted eight years, to the people's outcry, the deliverance by Othniel, and the peace of 40 years, at the end of this cycle (Judg 3,8,11); (2) The second cycle of 98 years: including 18 years of the Moabite oppression (Judg 3,14), ending with salvation by Ehud, and 80 years of peace after the death of Eglon (Judg 3,30); (3) The third cycle of 60 years: 20 years of subjection by Jabin, the Canaanite king, and 40 years of peace after the victory of Barak and Deborah (Judg 4,2-3; 5,31); (4) The fourth cycle of 47 years: seven bad years of ravage by the Midianites followed by 40 years of peace in the time of Gideon (Judg 6,1; 8,28). These four temporal cycles were followed by three sub-periods, which came immediately after the death of Gideon: (1) The short period of Abimelech (three years: Judg 9,22); (2) 18 years of Ammonite oppression (Judg 10,8); (3) 40 years of Philistine oppression (Judg 13,1). Rest and peace are not mentioned after Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites; just a slaughter of 42,000 Israelites and a faithless sacrifice of his only daughter. Moreover, the Ammonite oppression was directly followed by 40 years of the Philistine oppression, as it is stated in Judg 10,7: "The Lord was angry with Israel, and he sold them to the Philistines and to the Ammonites". Note the order of the foes (first the Philistines), and the fact that this sentence is located in the introduction to the story of Jephthah. This indicates that in the Dtr's eyes, the Ammonite oppression and the Philistine oppression are one continuous epoch.

The total of the figures discussed above is 400 years: 40 years in the desert, 46 years of Saul, David and Solomon (=86 years) and 314 years of the period of the judges. The difference between 480 and 400 is 80, and this is the time that the Dtr reckoned for the two links that are missing in this puzzle: the period of Joshua and the time of Samuel, each, in the Dtr's opinion, lasting 40 years.

Two important questions are still unanswered: (1) To when should we date the periods of Samson and Eli? (2) Is the round figure of Israel's 300 years settlement in southern Transjordan in accordance with the Dtr's system?

The key to the understanding of first question is Judg 15,20. It points out clearly that the 20 years of Samson are located within the period of the 40 years of the Philistine oppression: "Samson was judge over Israel for twenty years, in the days of the Philistines". This fact is also reflected in Judg 15,11, and in the words of the angel to Samson's mother in 13,5: "He will strike the first blow to deliver Israel from the power of the Philistines". Samson has nothing to do with the ending of the Philistine oppression, since no matter what damage he caused them, in the end he died as a prisoner of the Philistines. Actually, there is no evidence of the termination of the Philistine oppression until the defeat of the Philistines by the Lord in the time of Samuel (1 Sam 7,7-14; cf. also 1 Sam 4,9). The battle of Eben-hezer was fought about 21 years before Samuel's victory over the Philistines. This view is clearly deduced from the ark tradition, especially from the chronological notes in 1 Sam 6,1 and 7,2. The ark had been in the Philistine cities for seven months (6,1), then in Beth-shemesh, probably for a short period (6,11-21), and finally in Kiriath-jearim for 20 years (7,2). The conclusion is manifest: the fatal defeat at Eben-hezer, and probably the destruction of Shilo too, happened about halfway through the 40 years of the

Philistine oppression mentioned in Judg 13,1<sup>(16)</sup>. Since Eli died of shock at the news of the defeat at Eben-hezer, it is clear that the last 19 years of Eli overlapped the first period of the Philistine oppression, just as Samson judged Israel “in the days of the Philistines”. Eli’s term of office goes back to the beginning of the long period of decline and oppression that started after the death of Gideon. This conclusion corresponds perfectly with the negative attitude of the author of the pre-deuteronomistic edition of the Book of Samuel to the house of Eli, expressed in detail in the first chapters of the Book of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam 1,14; 2,12-17, 22-36; 3,11-14). Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are also described as leaders that disappointed, so the three of them joined the three other failed leaders: Abimelech, Jephthah and Samson, who were active at exactly the same period. The 61 years from the death of Gideon to the end of the Philistine oppression is divided in the Book of Judges into three sub-periods (Abimelech [3]; Ammonite oppression [18]; Philistine oppression [40]). This period of 61 years corresponds to the 61 years from the beginning of the period of Eli to the beginning of the epoch of Samuel. This era is also divided into three sub-periods: 40 years of Eli (1 Sam 4,18); seven months of the ark in the land of the Philistines, and about 20 years of the ark in Beth-shemesh and Kiriath-jearim (see table, gray part).

Figures for the periods of Joshua and Samuel are missing in the MT. Yet, the suggestion that each epoch lasted 40 years corresponds perfectly with the chronological data in the Books of Joshua and Samuel. Josh 14,7-10 indicates clearly that the conquest of Cisjordan took 5 years, since Caleb says that he is now 85 years old, and that 45 years elapsed between the sending of the spies into Canaan (in the first year of the wandering in the wilderness) and the allotment of the land among the Israelites. Caleb’s age (85=40+45) may indicate that Joshua’s lifetime (110 years – Josh 24,29; Judg 2,8) was divided into three main periods: 40+40+30. He was 40 years old when he was sent as a spy to Canaan, same as Caleb (“Forty years old was I when Moses ... sent me ... to spy out the land” – Josh 14,7); and, he lived 40 years in the desert; and he led the people of Israel for 30 years. Accordingly, he was 80 years old when he was nominated as leader, the same as Moses. To the 30 years of the leadership of Joshua, the Dtr probably added a period of 10 years for the epoch of the “elders that outlived Joshua” (Josh 24,31). In Judg 2,9-10 it is pointed out that the “period of the judges” started only after the death of all the generation of Joshua, just as the period of Joshua started only after the generation of Moses had passed away. Since only the Israelites that were born in the desert entered to the land, and since, at the end of the epoch of Joshua, all his generation had passed away, it is impossible to suppose that the period of Joshua was of five years only. On the contrary, only a long period of 40 years would accord with all the traditions mentioned above. The conclusion is that the generation of Joshua passed away after 40 years, like the generation of Moses.

As for the 40 years of the epoch of Samuel, it is important to look at the lifetimes of the leaders of Israel mentioned in the DH. There is a clear line of decline in the lifetime of these leaders, according to the schematic numbers mentioned by the Dtr: Moses lived 120 years; Joshua – 110; Eli – 98 (1 Sam

<sup>(16)</sup> For this proposal see NOTH, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 22.

4,15); and David only 70 years (2 Sam 5,4). No king of the house of David reached the age of 70 (Manasseh [67], and Uzziah [68] were close). The age of Samuel matches this pattern well: he "judged" Israel 40 years; about 21 years intervened from the battle of Eben-hezer to Samuel's victory over the Philistines; and it is stated that Samuel was a teenager ("na'ar") at the death of Eli (1 Sam 3,1)<sup>(17)</sup>. These calculations are also in harmony with the descriptions of Samuel as an old man in the last years of his period (1 Sam 8,1.5; 12,2; 28,14).

The 300 years of Israel's settlement in Transjordan (Judg 11,26) is a round figure, and it should not be adhered to exactly. This said, it is clear that it corresponds perfectly with the chronological framework proposed above: 274 years passed from the beginning of the oppression by Cushan-rishathim to the end of the Ammonite oppression, so the end of the epoch of "300 years" falls in the first half of the period of Joshua. This conclusion corresponds with Josh 22,1-6, which points out that "many days" passed till Joshua sent the tribes of Transjordan to settle in their allotments. It is also obvious that the chronological data in Judg 11,26 contradicts the suggestion that the series of the minor Judges, with the dates assigned to them, were included in the DH. Adding the 45 years of Tola and Jair, to the period of the Judges, would put the end of the epoch of the "300 years" after the time of Joshua, namely about 19 years after Joshua and of all his generation had passed away.

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The series of the minor judges were not included in the deuteronomistic edition of the book of Judges, and therefore did not form part of the Dtr's chronology. Once this conclusion is reached, the Dtr's calculations become very simple and lucid. He constructs a chronological framework spanning 480 years from the Exodus to the establishment of the Temple, and correlates it with the chronological data in Deuteronomy-Samuel. He opens the DH with a 40 years epoch assigned to the leadership of Moses, and concludes the 480 years era with a period of 40 years plus 4 years assigned to David and Solomon (see table). The next two main links are those of the periods of the two leaders from the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua and Samuel, each lasting 40 years. The period between Joshua and Samuel, spanning 314 years, comprises 10 links, arranged by the Dtr in a pattern of 4 + 3 + 3: four periods of the successive judges (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Gideon), each divided into four stages (sin, oppression, outcry and salvation); three periods related to the three disappointing Judges (Abimelech, Jephthah and Samson), paralleled by a similar overlapping period also divided into three sub-periods, and also related to three unsuccessful leaders: Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas (see table, gray part).

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<sup>(17)</sup> Josephus conjectured that Samuel was 12 years old when the Lord called him (*Antiquities*, V, 348).



SUMMARY

This article points out that the series of the minor judges were not included in the deuteronomistic edition of the Book of Judges, and therefore did not form part of the Dtr’s chronology. In the author’s opinion the Dtr constructs a chronological framework spanning 480 years from the Exodus to the establishment of the Temple (1 Kgs 6,1) and correlates it with the chronological data in Deuteronomy–Samuel.

Table: The 480 years framework and the epoch from the end of the period of Gideon to the beginning of the period of Samuel

|     |                                       |              |                                |  |           |  |  |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--|-----------|--|--|
| 480 | MOSES<br>40                           |              |                                |  |           | 300<br>YEARS<br>IN<br>TRANS-<br>JORDAN |  |
|     | 314<br>THE<br>JUDGES                  | JOSHUA<br>40 |                                |  |           |  |  |
|     |                                       |              | I<br>48                        | SIN<br>CUSHAN 8<br>OUTCRY<br>OTHNIEL<br>40 |           |  |  |
|     |                                       |              | II<br>98                       | SIN<br>EGLON 18<br>OUTCRY<br>EHUD 80       |           |  |  |
|     |                                       |              | III<br>60                      | SIN<br>JABIN 20<br>OUTCRY<br>DEBORAH<br>40 |           |  |  |
|     |                                       |              | IV<br>47                       | SIN<br>MIDIAN 7<br>OUTCRY<br>GIDEON 40     |           |  |  |
|     |                                       | 1            | ABIMELECH<br>3                 | 1  | ELI<br>40 |  |  |
|     |                                       | 2            | AMMONITE<br>OPPRESSION<br>18   |  |           |  |  |
|     |                                       | 3            | PHILISTINE<br>OPPRESSION<br>40 |  |           |  |  |
|     |                                       | SAMUEL<br>40 |                                |  |           |  |  |
|     | SAUL 2<br>DAVID<br>40<br>SOLOMON<br>4 |              |                                |  |           |  |  |

# RECENSIONES

## Vetus Testamentum

Ulrike DAHM, *Opferkult und Priestertum in Alt-Israel*. Ein kultur- und religionswissenschaftlicher Beitrag (BZAW 327). Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 2003, xiii-318 p. 15,5 × 23,5.

This work examines the sacrificial cult and priestly genealogies of the Hebrew Bible from a cultural and religious-historical perspective. It is a revised version of the author's 2001 Bremen University dissertation. The first part of this volume investigates the political triumph of the Aaronic (Zadokite) high priesthood in the post-Nehemiah period as revealed through an analysis of various genealogical lists. In the second part, the sacrificial rites of Exodus chapter 12 (Passover) and Leviticus chapters 1–7 are analyzed with regard to their cultural function as means of social communication. The present form of these texts are the result of several phases of Zadokite rewriting intended to make it possible for that group to appropriate the tasks and identity of the rival Levite faction. Dahm's study concludes with a cultural-anthropological hypothesis that evaluates the role of religious politics in the development of monotheism and theocracy in Second Temple Judaism. Several appendices and charts clarify key portions of the argument. The bibliography is extensive and there is an index of biblical and ancient sources.

The first section focuses on "the collective biography of Aaron". Assertions of prestige and power were correlated with fictive claims of descent from a "first ancestor" such as Aaron or Zadok. Manipulation of genealogical traditions was a way to solve social problems, order the social world, negotiate tensions between competing groups, and reconstruct history. Recognizing the fundamental historical accuracy of the list of priestly families in Ezra 2 (Nehemiah 7) leads to the conclusion that the beginning of the Zadokite high priestly office can be dated no earlier than the fourth century BCE. This list shows that the priestly leadership of Jerusalem was not yet Zadokite. Neither Zadok nor Aaron appear there, but rather the families of Joshua, Immer, Pashhur, and Harim. The incorporation of Aaron into the Zadokite genealogical concept took place later, in the post-Nehemiah period, as a way of coming to terms with the competing identity claims of the Levite group. Thus the Zadokite claim to high priestly office does not date from the return from exile, nor were the Zadokites connected to the priestly leadership of the First Temple. The Zadokites achieved high priestly office only in the first half of the fourth century because the (non-Zadokite) list of Neh 12,10-11 reaches down to about 370.

The Zadokites sustained and maximized their claim to the high priesthood in several, not completely coherent ways. These included expansions of the

Succession History to identify Zadok as successor of Ahitub and to allege that Zadok replaced Abiathar (although not as the Jerusalem Temple priest). Other strategies were the insertion of Jehozadak (who does not appear in the return lists) into the genealogical picture, the fabricated return list of Ezra 8 glorifying Zadokites and degrading Levites, and binding Zadok into the exodus tradition through an Eli/Phinehas connection.

However, the most extensive Zadokite claims are personified in the figures of Ezra and Aaron. Ezra appears as a Zadokite and a descendant of Aaron. Genealogically, he crystallizes Aaronic high priestly identity, but this is countered by what is actually reported of his activities as a teacher of torah and proponent of religious ethnicity. As both priest and teacher of religious law, Ezra embodied the new claims of the Zadokite sacrifice priests, who were taking over Levitical practices in a religious revolution. The Zadokites used the figure of Ezra to add the role of teachers of the law to their previous identity as sacrifice priests. In this way the Levites' claim to be the exclusive transmitters of the law of their ancestor Moses was undermined. Ezra signified that the Zadokites could promote religious law and ethnic religion without abandoning their practice of sacrifice. In an even more extensive way, Aaron, as the high priest of a monotheistic, centralized, Jerusalem sacrifice cult, came to function as an identity figure for the Zadokite group. As "brother of Moses" he countered the Mosaic claims of the Levite group. Aaron became the Zadokites' "first ancestor" by means of an unbroken pre-monarchic genealogical sequence from Aaron to Amariah (for example, Ezra 7,3-5). However, apart from these Zadokite claims there is no real Aaron tradition. He occurs only as the ancestor of a sacrifice priesthood like that of the Zadokites and as one who institutes and teaches religious law as part of the Zadokite claim to be tradents of the torah in place of the Levites.

In the second part of the book, the rites described Exodus 12 and Leviticus 1-7 are analyzed with regard to their function as media of social communication. A detailed analysis of these chapters' composition history uncovers the development of the social functions of these rituals over time.

The present shape of the Passover texts are the result of several Zadokite redactions. An old Passover unconnected to the exodus can be reconstructed in two versions (Exod 12,3b.6b.7.8a.11b $\beta$  and within the Moses narrative of 12,21b-22.27a $\beta$ ). This was an apotropaic threshold sacrifice, typical of the tribal cultures of the ancient and present-day Middle East. Its ritual symbolism provided solutions to social and economic problems involving group identity. Successive Zadokite redactions included an older Moses Passover narrative that interpreted the Passover as a saving act (12,21-27, no earlier than Nehemiah) and a younger Aaron Passover myth (12,1-14.21-28), dated no earlier than the middle of fourth century. Another perspective is that of 12,3a $\beta$ -11, which brings ritual and historical narrative together with the goal of centralization. This perspective had the political objective of removing the exodus memorial sacrifice from the control of the elders and kinship groups and connecting it to the larger sacrificial system under priestly control. Zadokite redaction also appears in two versions of an exodus memorial Passover rite. Exodus 12,14 (Aaron) is the earliest written tradition of a temple-based Passover as a "festival to Yahweh" (not before the second half of the fourth century). In Exod 12,21b-22.27a $\beta$  (Moses) the sacrifice is

practiced at the house threshold. This last perspective is part of a larger post-exilic process of historicization by means of ritual. The Passover modified by Zadokite interests was combined with the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which was part of the Levitical calendar and functioned as a symbol of the exodus through the motif of "haste". In this way two ritual means of communication were brought together.

Leviticus 1–7 is part of a larger political agenda anchored in a narrative of the exodus myth. It functioned to promote the Zadokite claim to high priestly office and to exclude and demote the competing Levite group. The rites described have their origin in the Zadokite sacrificial practice of the post-Nehemiah temple and have been embedded into the biography of Aaron. These texts were the product of a cooperative authorial process involving several writers from the Zadokite circle. They are one element of a large-scale and complex program of putting sacrifice traditions into a narrative frame recounting the exodus. No earlier connected story existed without Aaron and there are no older fragments of an earlier story without the high priestly figure of Aaron.

Rituals are a form of social communication that set forth problems and achieve solutions. In the period following the exile, the most important issues were monotheism, tendencies toward religious law, the historicization of ritual behavior, religion and ethnicity, and the legitimacy of the high priesthood. In the Zadokite system, "peace offering" was the generic term for all slaughter offerings and the designation for the basic form of a slaughter offering. It was not a special form of sacrifice. Its basic structural element was "peace making", easing social and economic tension through gifts of reciprocity. The term cannot be interpreted in the sense of a meal or communion as is commonly done. The Zadokite program reinterpreted older forms of offerings such as the guilt offerings in terms of the "sin offering". The Zadokites accentuated sin and sacrifice as ways of understanding and dealing with social and religious problems. Sin is presented a permanent problem, radicalized through the idea of unintentional guilt, and thus something that had to be managed through a yearly complex of sin offering rituals. All this strengthened the Zadokite position over against their rivals.

This volume is an important contribution to the study of Israelite priesthood and is highly appealing because it explains so many things in an integrated fashion. It helpfully recognizes the increasing role of social scientific perspectives in the study of Israelite ritual and religion. It fully appreciates the communicative function of ritual in regard to the ideologies and structures of a society, as well as the sociological function of genealogy and "first ancestors" in building and maintaining group identity and status. Dahm's approach makes sense out of the Hebrew Bible's convoluted hodgepodge of priestly genealogies, including the Ezra to Seriah to Zadok link, the Zadok to Ahitub link, the place of Eli and Phinehas, and the incorporation of Aaron into the picture. Unjustified presumptions about a non-priestly role for Aaron in the tradition are avoided. The result is a comprehensive solution for problems usually treated in isolation. Pentateuchal cultic texts about Aaron, his role as the elder brother of Moses, the place of Zadok in the Succession History, the lists of returned exiles, and the priestly genealogical lists are all incorporated into a single, coherent explanation.

Generally scholarship on the history of the priesthood has focused on two periods. One focus has been on developments and reorganizations in the Persian era: the emergence of the political hegemony of the high priest, contested interplay between Zadokites and Levites, and the origin and function of the figure of Aaron. Dahm's sociologically sophisticated approach makes possible an integrated theoretical picture of how manipulations of fictive genealogy, changes in ritual practice and ideology, and the editing of Pentateuchal texts worked together to support Zadokite claims. The other scholarly focus has attempted to untangle the situation of the monarchy period. What priestly groups (Aaronides, Elides, Mushites, Levites) functioned at what shrines? What was their relationship to the royal sanctuaries of Jerusalem and Bethel? What happened as a result of Josiah's restructuring reform? Dahm's conclusion that the Zadokite high priestly office was a relatively late development (about 350 BCE), if accepted, forces several conclusions. Aaron does not represent a priestly group from the monarchy period but a genealogical and narrative element used by the Zadokites to co-opt Levitical claims. The Aaronides were not the priesthood of the bull cult of Bethel; Exodus 32 is a vilification stemming from the competing Levites. Solomon's alleged replacement of Abiathar by Zadok reflects Persian period claims and does not provide historical data about any Zadokite priesthood in monarchic Jerusalem. The Jerusalem priests of the restoration period (Joshua, fictively son of Jehozadak, down to Jaddua) were not Zadokites, because the high priestly list of Neh 12,10-11 has no Aaronic connection.

Dahm engages current scholarship at numerous points. Significantly, Dahm's approach undermines the highly popular reconstruction of Frank Cross (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* [Cambridge 1973] 195-215). His notion of competing Mushite (Shiloh, Dan) and Aaronic (Bethel, Jerusalem) priesthoods in the premonarchic period cannot be maintained. Cross focused too exclusively on two texts: the "Aaronic" Exod 6,16-25 and the "Mushite" Num 26,58. He failed to take into account the complexity of the critical issues involved. His reliance on the late and artificial "asylum city" list of Joshua 21 is a case in point.

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Joseph BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B). New York, Doubleday, 2003. xvi-348 p. 16 × 24. \$45.00 – Can\$ 68.00

Prof. Blenkinsopp's third commentary volume on Isaiah follows the felicitous tracks set out in the volumes on chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-55 (reviewed in *Bib* 83 [2002] 273-277 and 84 [2003] 426-429). The first one offered a long introduction (about 60 pages) to the book of Isaiah as a whole (henceforth BI), therefore this one (like the second one) can start with a sort of monograph

on chs. 56–66 (almost 65 pages). It is long enough to give a survey of all the problems which scholars of the past century have raised as well as the personal, often creative solutions proposed by the commentator. The eleven chapters are seen as a coherent unity of a definite, literary structure within the set-up of the whole book although they are the product of a cumulative process in the post-exilic community, more specifically in “the Isaianic school”, between the completion of the second temple and the arrival of Nehemiah.

The division of the introduction mirrors that of the introduction to chs. 40–55 (volume II). Some chapters, however, do not recur, such as “chs. 40–55 as part of the biblical canon” (II, 54–59) and “a prefatory word about reading” (II, 124–126), rightly so, I would say, because these topics belong rather to general hermeneutics. Other subdivisions have been re-arranged: “the historical context” now precedes “the formation of the chapters”. This is only natural since their socio-historical origin is a variegated phenomenon which lies at the basis of their literary formation, as opposed to the origin of chs. 40–55 in which the end of the exile and the subsequent return to the homeland form a coherent background, real or imagined. With regard to the contents it is only regrettable that this volume does not offer a useful “list of key Hebrew terms” as is the case in volume II. Is the vocabulary of these chapters, due to their development over a longer period, so disparate that key terms are lacking?

I now turn to the successive chapters of the introduction. Ch. 1, on “chs. 56–66 as part of BI” (27–37), opens with a section on Duhm’s tripartite hypothesis (1892) and its vicissitudes but mainly in the Anglo-Saxon scholarly tradition (C.C. Torrey, J.D. Smart, C.R. Seitz, B.S. Childs). It is true that the history of the German research is treated at great length in ch. 4 on “the formation of chs. 56–66” (54–66). It remains difficult, however, to find these two sides of the research separated: readers might better have been served by a combined survey. After all, the innertextual growth of Third Isaiah and the integration of this booklet into the total book was probably for the greater part just one process. In the same way, the question of “56,1: continuity and a new beginning” (29–30) can hardly prescind from the all-embracing problem of “chs. 56–66 in relation to chs. 40–55” (30–34). In other words, the highly “educational” quality of this chapter has a small disadvantage: problems have sometimes been split up in a way that obscures their entanglement.

This section, nevertheless, nicely draws the continuing lines between the second and the third part of BI, such as “comfort”, “the way”, “the coming of God”, “the glory of God”, “the Creator God”, “justice, righteousness, salvation” and “the servant and the servants”. It was a fortunate choice to describe these topics not paradigmatically but syntagmatically, i.e. in their concrete contexts. In this way, the section prepares for the actual exegesis later in the commentary where much of the same material is treated on the level of “borrowing” (just to avoid the term “quotation”).

It could be expected that the last section on “chs. 56–66 in relation to chs. 1–39” (34–37) has less to offer: general themes, not more mutual connections than with other prophetic books (especially with Jer 1–12), only a number of parallels between the first and last chapters of BI, the accounts of judgement

on Edom (ch. 34 and 63,1-6) and the "signal" passages (56,8 and 11,11-12). The understanding of the relationship between these two parts of BI are still prey, of course, to Duhm's tripartite hypothesis. The connections mentioned suffice, however, to adumbrate an all-embracing redaction of BI, such as is the subject of much contemporary research. Just one example could have been added: what are the lines of affinity between the three "vocation reports": ch. 6, 40,1-8 and ch. 61?

Ch. 2, "The literary character of chs. 56-66" (37-42), deals with "structure as a clue to meaning" and "prosody and genre". Short as it is, it nevertheless prepares the readers for all sorts of literary phenomena to which attention is drawn in the exegesis of the text. This reviewer was pleased to find that this volume pays even more attention to literary exegesis than did the two preceding ones.

Ch. 3 deals with the very arduous problem of the historical context of Trito-Isaiah (42-54). Here B's expertise in the field of ancient history comes to the fore. A splendid survey of both the poverty of our knowledge regarding the early pre-exilic period and a historical sketch of the data which come from extra-biblical sources lead to a section called "historical clues" (51-54). By means of an investigation into the term "tremblers", both in Isa 66 (here linked with "servants") and Ezra 9-10, the author comes to the conclusion that these texts speak from the same socio-historical setting in different epochs: in Ezra the term points to a faction which is able to dictate a religious reform, in Trito-Isaiah the term refers to a persecuted minority, probably because their attempts at bringing reforms into force had failed and ended in their marginalization. Consequently, the last two chapters of Trito-Isaiah should be dated in relation to the aftermath of Ezra's activities whereas the preceding chapters are earlier. Among them, chs. 60-62 show so much affinity with Deutero-Isaiah that this block may safely be considered to be the oldest part. In short, Isa 56-66 gradually came into being in the period from the completion of the second temple to Ezra's arrival (54).

Prof. Blenkinsopp has certainly introduced a new approach to tackling this tenacious socio-historical problem by calling for a meticulous exegesis of common semantic data in Isa 56-66 and Ezra-Nehemiah, two books which in some way or other have to do with the genesis of Trito-Isaiah. His approach is certainly an improvement in comparison to the postulate of a general antinomy between a theocratic upper-class and a prophetic-apocalyptic group on the fringe of the community because his theory involves a historical development in their relationship, even a reversal of it, between the completion of the second temple and the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the eyes of the present reviewer, however, much more research of the same sort should be undertaken before his socio-historical hypothesis will begin to prove useful in the literary-historical dating of Trito-Isaiah.

Ch. 4, "The formation of Isaiah 56-66" (54-66), opens with a rather extensive survey of the research: it describes the development from the old one-author theory to present-day redactional maximalism, with all their variations (54-60; cf. above). Subsequently, on the methodological assumption that ancient texts require a combined diachronic and synchronic analysis, B. follows the main trend of recent critical studies in his quest for "a meaningful arrangement of chs. 56-66" (60-63). This leads the author to the

fairly common theory of a tripartite division of Trito-Isaiah: chs. 60–62 (with 61,1-3 in the very middle) form the center around which chs. 56–59 and chs. 63–66 have symmetrically been positioned (a-b-a) according to their subordinate divisions (59,15b-20 corresponds to 63,1-6; 59,1-15a to 63,7–64,11; 56,9–58,14 to 65,1-16; 56,1-8 to 66,18-24 [the two bookends]; cf. the schema on page 61). This literary ring composition is not fully covered by the historical stratigraphy but the entire set-up reflects a thematic and aesthetic plan which dominates the material emanating from different sources.

Blenkinsopp elaborates his proposal in short, concrete descriptions of the inner movement of the three relatively autonomous major blocks (chs. 56–59, 60–62, 63–66) while he takes into account how they have come together in the cumulative process from which BI ensues. In this description, the texts which are lacking in the schema find their place assigned as redactional links: (1) 59,21 which serves as “the prophetic signature” to chs. 56–59; (2) 66,7-14 which concludes chs. 56–66; (3) 66,15-20(21) which forms the finale to chs. 40–55 together with chs. 55–56; (4) 66,22-23(24) which brings the whole book to a close. It is clear that this schema takes up earlier sketches of a concentric structure in a new way (cf. U. Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja. Komposition und Endgestalt* [HBS 16; Freiburg 1998] 419-421, for a strictly synchronic ring composition and a survey of the literature). My own problem with Blenkinsopp’s division may simply be due to a printing error. If we should indeed read on page 61, line 10: “65,1-16”, the text complex of 65,17–66,6 is entirely lacking in the schema and I would ask where we are supposed to position it. I presume, however, that “65,1–66,6” is the intended reading (cf. the annoying printing error on page 62, line 26: “16,22-23” instead of “66,22-23”).

This outstanding chapter ends with a section on “the bearers of the Deutero-Isaianic prophetic tradition” (63–66). The title indicates that according to Blenkinsopp, the authorship of Trito-Isaiah is to be found in the circle of tradents for whom chs. 40–55 (or its core) possessed permanent validity. An analysis of all the prophetic first-person speeches throughout chs. 40–66 brings him to the detection of “stages in the development of a prophetic succession leading to the emergence of an eschatologically oriented sect within the Iranian province of Judah some time in the mid-fifth century BCE” (65). Hostility towards the temple authorities is certainly an important characteristic of these people but Blenkinsopp is very reserved with regard to the continuance of this group into later epochs, such as the time of Seleucids and the Qumran community.

Due to lack of space, I skip over the two following, informative chapters (ch. 5: “Text and ancient versions”; ch. 6: “Chapters from the early history of the interpretation of Isaiah 56–66”) and try to give an impression of the last one, ch. 7, on “Aspects of the theology of Isaiah 56–66” (77-91). This chapter certainly contains an innovative approach. In the first section (“Tradition and situation”) Blenkinsopp does not start from a conventional set of topics (God, people, covenant, sin etc.) which could form the theological raster of any biblical book but from the fact that this booklet came into being during a longer period (from the late 6th to the mid-5th century BCE) of shifting views on basically the same situation. It is directed to an audience which struggles



with the long-term effects of the Babylonian conquest and the ensuing crisis of faith. The real theology of these chapters, then, is the question: how do the different speakers herein address the prevailing disorientation and disillusionment? Their answer, in the view of Blenkinsopp, draws on the one hand on the Deutero-Isaianic tradition, on the other on the Deuteronomistic movement, the two apparently interfering with each other. It is to be hoped that Blenkinsopp's hypothesis will draw attention to the lively debate about the extent of the Deuteronomistic movement. In my view, "Deuteronomistic" becomes a synonym of "post-exilic" if we assume this current to have extended over the whole biblical transmission. Anyhow, the next section ("Dealing with issues theologically", 80-88) takes an inventory of issues in Trito-Isaiah that clearly stem from these two traditions such as the monarchy, God as king, the people, the cult and, of course, the place of the nations and foreigners. Two short sections try to characterize this theology: is it apocalyptic or just oriented to the future, and what do the names of God, the protagonist in its view of world events, involve?

This three-volume commentary on Isaiah is now complete. It bears the mark of just one author, which provides it with a coherent interpretation — an enormous advantage in comparison to commentaries written by several authors. It is the result of great expertise in ancient texts and history, and serious, creative interaction with present-day scholarship. Its beautiful literary style in translation and comments makes it a pleasure to read. Its influence will surely be long-standing.

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Germana STROLA, *Il desiderio di Dio*. Studio dei Salmi 42-43 (Studi e ricerche). Assisi, Cittadella Editrice, 2003. 501 p. 15 × 21. €20.

L'autrice presenta qui in forma "opportunamente riveduta" una tesi di laurea difesa all'Istituto Biblico di Roma sotto la direzione del prof. P. Bovati. Si tratta di un solido lavoro scientifico, come fa fede la copiosa bibliografia consultata (407-480). Non c'è affermazione importante, di cui l'autrice non presenti uno *status quaestionis* esauriente sulla ricerca contemporanea.

Il lavoro è strutturato in maniera lineare. Una prima sezione, preliminare, affronta brevemente alcune questioni fondamentali, come l'unità dei due salmi, la loro struttura in tre strofe, concluse ciascuna dal ritornello: "Perché ti abbatti, anima mia, e perché fremi in me? Spera in Dio: poiché ancora gli renderò grazie, salvezza del mio volto e mio Dio" (42,6.12; 43,5), e la loro datazione (esilico-postesilica).

La parte centrale del lavoro è divisa in tre sezioni, dedicate ciascuna a una strofa del salmo (42,2-6; 42,7-12 e 43,1-5). In ciascuna di queste sezioni l'autrice procede in modo analogo. Dopo aver diviso ogni strofa nelle sue componenti strutturali, per ogni piccola unità essa anzitutto fa un'accurata critica testuale, giungendo (mi sembra con buone ragioni) quasi

sempre a preferire il testo masoretico alle altre versioni e congetture. La traduzione proposta è talora inusuale, come p. es. in 42,5b, dove il difficile TM *kî 'e'ēbōr bassāk 'eddaddēm 'ad bêt 'ēlōhīm* è reso: "Avanzavo nel santuario, procedevo fino alla casa di Dio", o in 42,6b, che viene reso così: "Spera in Dio, perché ancora potrò lodarlo, salvezza è il suo volto". Giudiziosamente Strola resiste alla tentazione di modificare il ritornello del v. 6 secondo il tenore di 42,12 e di 43,5 (come fa, per esempio la CEI): "Noi riteniamo... che omologare, per principio, tutte le ricorrenze del ritornello non corrisponda ai criteri letterari degli antichi e sia, piuttosto, una tendenza moderna: la presenza di piccole varianti nella ripresa di testi sostanzialmente uguali è una caratteristica ... delle antiche letterature medioorientali" (192). Lo studio dei ritornelli nel Cantico dei Cantici ha condotto l'autore della presente recensione alla stessa conclusione.

Il passo successivo è quello della "organizzazione retorica". Prima di addentrarsi nell'analisi, l'autrice sistematicamente studia la struttura, non solo a livello di salmo, ma a livello di strofa e di ogni piccola unità. Senza perdersi in preziosismi fine a se stessi, ma con tatto sicuro, essa scopre nel salmo un tessuto logico coerente ed unitario.

Il terzo passo è quello dell'analisi meticolosa, verso per verso, per cogliere il senso di ogni singola affermazione. L'autrice conduce un'indagine prevalentemente lessematica e semantica, chiarendo il significato di ogni termine e di ogni espressione attraverso il confronto con i testi biblici paralleli. Particolare importanza è data alla comprensione delle metafore. Forse talora lo studio delle singole espressioni e metafore risulta fin troppo sviluppato, volendo abbracciare tutto lo spettro semantico e dando l'impressione di uno studio fine a se stesso. Si veda, p. es., lo studio della metafora della cerva, dove l'autrice allarga il campo alla cultura cinese, giapponese, amerindia e messicana (82-83), quello della "sete", sviluppata in un'indagine sul significato del "deserto" (101-104), quello del termine *haj*, che assume le dimensioni di un articolo di dizionario (118-128). Restringere la ricerca a quei significati rilevanti per il salmo avrebbe dato più compattezza all'argomentazione.

Fortunatamente per il lettore, ogni unità, piccola e grande, è conclusa da una sintesi, in cui l'autrice ricapitola la ricerca e la focalizza sull'essenziale.

La preoccupazione sintetica caratterizza anche l'ultima parte del libro (*Conclusione*, 374-406), in cui l'autrice dapprima ritorna sulla questione della datazione, confrontando (un po' frettolosamente, per la verità) il salmo con altri delle collezioni di *Qorah* e con una serie di testi paralleli (Gio 2,3-10; Sal 77; Sal 143; Lam 3), i quali confermerebbero la datazione esilico-postesilica (381-395), e poi si diffonde sulla tematica fondamentale della ricerca (*Desiderio, sentimenti e preghiera*, 396-406).

Che cosa offre il libro di nuovo? Diciamo che esso non si caratterizza per novità particolari riguardo all'interpretazione, come l'autrice stessa riconosce (15). Certo, anche solo fare il punto sulla ricerca contemporanea sul Salmo 42-43 è un'impresa da non sottovalutare. Ma oltre a questo, indubbiamente il lavoro non manca di una sua originalità. Il titolo del libro, "Il desiderio di Dio", non è casuale. Esso induce l'attenzione sull'ottica particolare dell'autrice, che vede nel salmo non tanto un testo liturgico o

il ricordo di particolari circostanze storiche, ma l'espressione dei sentimenti di un individuo, con cui l'orante di ogni epoca si può identificare. Con sensibilità squisitamente femminile, l'autrice prende a modello il bel libro di Bruna Costacurta, *La vita minacciata. Il tema della paura nella Bibbia Ebraica* (AnBib 119; Roma 1988), studiando esemplarmente, nel Sal 42-43, il sentimento del desiderio. Al termine dell'indagine esegetica, essa riassume in alcune dense pagine la dimensione antropologica della sua ricerca, soffermandosi sulla rilevanza dei sentimenti (396-398), un aspetto abbastanza trascurato nella ricerca sui salmi. Si comprende come in questa prospettiva il Salmo sia inteso soprattutto come espressione della preghiera individuale, come osserva l'autrice: "Il tema della individualizzazione della relazione con Dio, soprattutto nella preghiera salmica, meriterebbe un adeguato approfondimento scientifico" (377).

Per ciò che riguarda la categoria del "desiderio", alla cui luce Strola invita a leggere il Salmo 42-43, l'autrice ne mette in rilievo non solo la componente psicologica, ma anche quella metafisica: esso "è una modalità dell'essere che attraversa e unifica i sentimenti come struttura di un soggetto desiderante (*carente di - aspirante a*) nella sua trascendenza verso l'Altro" (399). L'autrice invita a intendere le coordinate spazio-temporali, presenti nel testo, come espressione simbolica del desiderio, e perciò non confinate a un'individuale esperienza storica, ma appropriabili da ogni orante (402-404). Infine essa sottolinea la circolarità delle emozioni (404-406): il salmo non presenta una progressione dalla tristezza alla gioia, ma un costante passaggio da un sentimento all'altro, fino alla fine (cfr. 43,5).

Indubbiamente quest'ottica particolare offre una lettura suggestiva e proietta una luce nuova sul Sal 42-43. Le osservazioni critiche che seguono non vogliono intaccare la positività fondamentale dell'opera. La mia osservazione principale è la seguente. La lettura di un salmo dal punto di vista dei sentimenti rischia di mettere in secondo piano la dimensione storica e istituzionale dello stesso. Non che l'autrice ignori questi due aspetti, ma questa non è la sua preoccupazione, la sua attenzione è, si è visto, altrove. Qualche esempio. Il richiamo alle precise coordinate geografiche di Sal 42,7 ("dalla terra del Giordano e degli Ermon, dal monte Mizar") è inteso simbolicamente. "Il salmista, scrivendo in linguaggio poetico, non intende forse indicare con esattezza nessuna località geografica determinata, ma suggerisce un orizzonte geografico che bisognerebbe leggere, prevalentemente, in chiave tipologica e antropologica" (241). Anche il richiamo alle "cateratte" in 42,8 è inteso in questo senso: "Considerando... il carattere poetico del testo, il termine va letto soprattutto come un elemento della metafora delle acque distruttrici" (256). Il pellegrinaggio dall'esilio al tempio di Gerusalemme è inteso come "espressione del movimento, che dai confini misteriosi del Nord eleva il desiderio verso Dio, situato simbolicamente al centro del mondo" (247). Intendiamoci, non è che l'autrice ignori la dimensione concreta del "viaggio" ("All'interno della cultura biblica, non si può scindere l'anelito spirituale verso Dio dalla tensione a ricongiungersi con le sue mediazioni storiche", 143), ma non si sofferma su di essa: l'accento è posto sulla dimensione antropologica, universalmente umana. Così però il salmo rischia di perdere la sua concretezza storica, unica.

Un'altra osservazione. L'autrice ricorre alla categoria della "riconci-

liazione”, leggendo in questo senso il ritorno in patria: “La conduzione dell’orante al Monte Santo... è un simbolo del ritorno in grazia e quindi della riconciliazione con Dio” (367 cfr. 137.140.142.144), e vedendo nell’esilio in cui si trova il salmista un castigo divino: “Nel suo sgomento, di fronte a un’esperienza simile alla morte, il salmista avverte il dispiegarsi, nei suoi confronti di un’azione punitiva attraverso degli *šinnôrim* che vengono da Dio” (254, cfr. 142.144). Sinceramente, questo mi sembra andare oltre i dati del testo. Forse si può interpretare come una “punizione” 42,8 e 43,2 (ma non necessariamente l’inimicizia di Dio è legata a una colpa dell’uomo, e ad ogni modo questo aspetto non è sottolineato); però nel testo non si parla di conversione, e quindi il tema della “riconciliazione” sembra essere al di fuori dell’orizzonte del salmo. Forse questo è un caso di sopra-interpretazione. Ma si tratta di un caso isolato. In genere le osservazioni sono ponderate e condivisibili.

Il testo è stampato accuratamente: ho trovato pochi errori di stampa (“ciò nutre” per “ciò che nutre”, 150; “dalla canto” per “dal canto”, 248; “‘ôdenû” per “‘ôdennû”, 367, e “è stato è” per “è stato”, 399).

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Jeremy CORLEY, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship* (Brown Judaic Studies 316). Providence, Brown University, 2002. xv-297 p. 15,5 × 23,5. \$39.95

In questa tesi presentata nel 1996 a Washington (Catholic University of America) e diretta da A. Di Lella, J. Corley (= C.) studia sette pericopi di Ben Sira (= BS) dedicate al tema dell’amicizia, considerata nei suoi diversi aspetti: Sir 6,5-17 (pericoli e benefici dell’amicizia); 9,10-16 (cercarsi gli amici tra i timorati di Dio); 13,15-23 (impossibilità dell’amicizia tra il povero e il ricco); 19,13-17G (moderazione nel rimproverare gli amici); 22,19-26G (non offendere gli amici con la lingua, ma aiutarli nel bisogno); 27,16-21G (non rivelare i segreti degli amici); 37,1-6 (discernimento nella scelta degli amici). A motivo della loro affinità tematica, le pericopi 37,1-6 e 27,16-21 vengono rispettivamente studiate insieme a 6,5-17 (cap. 2) e a 19,13-17 (cap. 5), mentre le altre vengono trattate singolarmente: 9,10-16 (cap. 3), 13,15-23 (cap. 4), 22,19-26 (cap. 6). L’introduzione (cap. 1), oltre alle solite questioni introduttive di carattere storico, letterario e teologico sul libro di BS, presenta una sintetica rassegna sull’amicizia nell’ambiente extrabiblico (Grecia, Egitto, Mesopotamia) e in Israele, come anche sugli studi siracidei precedenti dedicati a questo tema, ma sottolinea pure in modo speciale le caratteristiche della poesia di BS (22-28). Nella conclusione (213-218) si richiamano gli aspetti più tipici della concezione di BS sull’amicizia: la sua bontà che si inquadra nella teologia della creazione, l’insistenza sulla cautela e sulla fedeltà che devono regolare il rapporto con gli amici, il suo fondamento religioso nel timor di Dio; per la

centralità di questa nozione in BS C. segue J. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach*. Ihre religiöse Struktur und ihre literarische und doktrinäre Bedeutung (AnBib 30; Roma 1967), al quale fa più volte riferimento (cf. specialmente 113, n. 108). Queste caratteristiche sono le stesse che si riscontrano nei riferimenti sporadici all'amicizia che sono considerati nell'Appendice (221-227).

Ogni pericope viene esaminata secondo questo schema costante che comprende nove punti: introduzione, delimitazione, testo H (con retroversione prevalentemente da G, per le tre pericopi mancanti nei MSS ebraici), note di critica testuale (basata sui MSS ebraici, e sulle antiche versioni G, S, L), traduzione, analisi poetica, contesto, esegesi, conclusione. Sfortunatamente, si evita di dare un titolo che indichi il contenuto di ogni pericope, che viene comunque riepilogato ogni volta nella conclusione. Il testo H, una volta che si è fatta una propria scelta in caso di congetture o di varianti illustrate nelle note di critica testuale, viene presentato con l'aggiunta della vocalizzazione, per la quale C. si basa di solito su quella fornita da M. S. Segal, nel suo Commentario in ebraico moderno (Jerusalem<sup>3</sup> 1972). La traduzione delle pericopi studiate è fedele e gradevole, ma non strettamente letterale; per esempio, *hāmās* è tradotto (163, 225) "lawlessness" e non nella resa più comune "violence". Il contesto di ogni pericope viene ogni volta stabilito sulla base della struttura del libro di BS già presentata all'inizio nell'Introduzione (23), per la quale si segue fondamentalmente quella proposta da P.W. Skehan – A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; Garden City, NY 1987) xiii-xvi, ma apportandovi qualche modifica suggerita soprattutto da J.D. Harvey, "Toward a Degree of Order in Ben Sira's Book", ZAW 105 (1993) 52-62, ma anche facendo riferimento a J. Marböck, H.-W. Jüngling e G. Sauer (23, n. 89).

Per quanto riguarda l'esegesi, il metodo seguito da C. si può definire di tipo intertestuale, nel senso che fa ampio uso dei passi considerati paralleli o affini e che vengono reperiti sia all'interno della Bibbia (compresi quelli dello stesso BS), sia nell'ambiente giudaico (specialmente Qumran e Flavio Giuseppe) e sia in quello extrabiblico. Di esso i testi più citati riguardano Ahiqar, Ankhsheshonq, il papiro Insinger, Aristotile, Euripide, Senofonte e, soprattutto, Teognide, che dedica all'amicizia molte considerazioni venate di pessimismo. Invece i paralleli biblici più sfruttati sono 1 Sam 20 (Davide e Gionata), 1 Sam 25 (Davide e Abigail), Lv 19,17-18, Pro 14,20; 18,24; 19,4. Ma la sezione che nello studio di ogni pericope mi è sembrata più interessante è quella dedicata all'analisi poetica del brano. In realtà, dopo che le singole pericopi sono state delimitate in base ad un criterio tematico suffragato in qualche modo dalla terminologia dell'amicizia, l'analisi poetica consente di mettere meglio a fuoco il loro stesso contenuto. Le figure retoriche che si riscontrano con maggiore frequenza sono: allitterazione, assonanza, anafora, chiasmo, inclusione, rima e strofa. Tenendo conto di questi espedienti stilistici si capta in modo più genuino anche il pensiero di BS, si comprende meglio il suo carattere e si rileva più accuratamente il suo metodo di lavoro.

Come si vede, questa monografia di C. si caratterizza per l'ordine, la metodicità del procedimento, la chiarezza espositiva e, di conseguenza, per una agevole leggibilità. Ma l'obiezione che le si può muovere riguarda la

maniera in cui vengono correlati il criterio tematico con quello terminologico al quale si vuol fare pure riferimento, ma circoscrivendolo in pratica al solo aggettivo φίλος (“amico”) per G e a ’*ôhēb* per H, come si evince dalla tabella dell’appendice riguardanti i riferimenti incidentali all’amicizia (219-221), e come veniva ribadito già all’inizio nella presentazione delle sette pericopi scelte per questo studio, quando si nota che φίλος vi ricorre 30 volte, di contro alle altre 18 menzioni sporadiche nel resto del libro (2, n. 4). In realtà, non è semplice delimitare un tema come l’amicizia che di sua natura è connesso variamente con le diverse sfaccettature che costituiscono il vasto ambito delle relazioni sociali prese in considerazione da BS, ma penso che si dovessero richiamare, almeno nell’appendice, i vari vocaboli che costituiscono il *campo semantico* dell’amicizia nelle sue diverse gradazioni, come, per esempio, ἀδελφός, ἐταῖρος, κοινωνός, πλησίον per G e *hābēr*, *rē’a* e *sūtāp* per H; ma sono importanti pure gli antonimi greci ἀντίδικος, ἐχθρός, ὑπεναντίος, ed ebraici ’*ôyēb*, *šar*, *šōnē*. Proprio l’inclusione di quest’ultimo concetto negativo nello spettro semantico dell’amicizia fa includere nel volume collettivo dedicato a questo tema ed edito da F.V. Reiterer, *Freundschaft bei Ben Sira*. Beiträge des Symposions zu Ben Sira, Salzburg 1995 (BZAW 244; Berlin – New York 1996) lo studio di altre due pericopi quali Sir 12,8-12 (dove ricorre pure φίλος: 12,5.9) e 25,1-11 (dove si trova anche φίλος: 25,1), non considerate da C., il quale peraltro aggiunge di suo i passi 9,10-16 e 13,15-23. E qui si può anche notare che l’esegesi condotta sul filo delle corrispondenze terminologiche risulta troppo analitica, ma non raggiunge il livello di una sintesi sistematica. È vero che il pensiero di BS quale è presentato nel suo libro è di tipo frammentario ed episodico, però è legittimo ed auspicabile che si tenti di tratteggiare in modo più profondo l’ispirazione di fondo che anima il suo insegnamento sulle relazioni sociali nel cui contesto si pone il caso speciale dell’amicizia. In questo caso credo che si debba dare molta più importanza ad un passo come 29,10G («Perdi pure l’argento per il fratello e l’amico, invece che la ruggine lo consumi sotto la pietra»), che invece è citato più volte da C., ma solo di passaggio (173, 209, 220, 224). Questo passo riscatta, o quanto meno controbilancia, l’eccessiva cautela di BS, che sembra poco proclive all’altruismo e al rischio che esso comporta.

Per quanto riguarda la vocalizzazione di H, in 9,12 (86, n. 15) e 13,24 (128), a differenza di Segal che vi legge il sostantivo astratto proprio dell’ebraico biblico *zādōn* (“insolenza”), C. ipotizza *zēdōn* che nell’ebraico rabbinico (86) indica l’aggettivo corrispondente (“insolente”), una preferenza che viene motivata appellandosi a G che traduce *zdw*n in questi due casi con un aggettivo, come ancora in 12,14 e 35,23, ma non in 7,6 e 10,13.18, dove si ha un sostantivo anche in G. Per l’aggettivo BS usa il corradicale *zēd* (10,22 [da correggere in *zār*]; 11,9; 12,7; 32,18) o *mēzīd* (3,16), mentre per quanto riguarda *zādōn*, a parte l’uso in senso assoluto che se ne fa in 9,12 (“l’insolenza che ha successo”), negli altri tre casi (12,14; 13,24; 35,23) questo sostantivo è retto da uno stato costruito ed è un genitivo di qualità, e perciò è reso da G con un aggettivo. Inoltre, la traduzione di καύχημα in 1,11G (114) con “exultation” è impropria, perché la resa più comune di questo vocabolo è “pride”; per un refuso “dissimulation” (119, r. 3 d. b.) deve essere corretto in “dissimilation”.

La ricca bibliografia (229-255) articolata in varie sezioni (1. Testi dei MSS ebraici e delle Versioni antiche, 2. Studi su BS, 3. Altri studi biblici attinenti al tema studiato, 4. Testi e studi della letteratura greca e latina) dedica la quinta sezione alle "opere moderne sull'amicizia" (255) dal punto di vista "della teologia, filosofia, psicologia e della cultura generale" (1), ma di fatto essa viene citata nel testo solo una volta e cumulativamente (1, n. 2), senza che venga minimamente accennata la problematica dell'amicizia in se stessa: Questo accenno può essere illuminante per farci comprendere ed apprezzare l'atteggiamento così cauto e variegato di BS sull'amicizia, che può avere anche oggi una plausibile ragionevolezza. Evidentemente, in una tesi predomina la preoccupazione metodologica di ben definire e delimitare l'oggetto della propria ricerca, come ha fatto C. Ma sembra legittimo in un lavoro basato su una precisa scelta *tematica*, aspettarsi un po' più di spessore teoretico riguardo al tema esaminato con una esegesi che non si muova solo sul filo delle parole, ma anche su quello meno meccanico dei concetti.

In conclusione, a parte questi rilievi critici, la tesi è ben costruita, attenendosi con una notevole coerenza alla criteriologia che si è ritenuto di dover scegliere.

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## Novum Testamentum

Matthias KONRADT, *Gericht und Gemeinde. Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor (BZNW 117)*. Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2003. 641 p. 15,5 × 23,5. € 98 / sFr 157

Matthias Konradt's study, his *Habilitationsschrift* for the University of Bonn, addresses a major issue in Pauline theology which simmers beneath all discussions of justification and ethics in Paul. What is the role and status of sayings about judgement in Paul's theology? Are they to be squeezed into a mould pre-set by what we understand to be Paul's teaching about justification by faith, explained away as relics of Paul's Jewish past, identified as revealing Paul's nomistic assumptions about what it means to stay in once one has gotten in, or perhaps relegated to functionality without pressing assumptions of Pauline coherence?

The author begins with 1 Thess 1,9-10. Paul employs traditional language to reassure the Thessalonians in the face of opposition from their kinsfolk. It does not envisage a universal judgement; as in 4,13-18 believers will escape

the destruction brought by God's wrath on the rest of the world. In 2,15-16 Paul is pointing to pristine precedents to assure his readers their adversaries, too, will face judgement. The threatened judgement in 4,1-8 is similarly God's wrath and implies that such believers will be excluded from the kingdom. 5,1-11 uses traditional eschatological motifs to urge the hearers to continue in their faith; those who sleep or are drunk and unwatchful endanger their salvation. Those persuaded to abandon their faith face wrath. Paul does hope in 2,19-29 that the Thessalonians will be a crown of boasting before the Lord at his coming and in 3,13 that their hearts will be kept to be blameless before God at the Lord's coming with all his holy ones (similarly 5,23), but Konradt does not see these texts as indicating a formal judgement proceeding. While this is so, one might ask what is happening when such hopes are being expressed.

Konradt sees the problem in 1 Cor 1-4 not as "*Irrlehre, sondern ein die Einheit der Gemeinde gefährdendes Fehlverhalten*" (222), which showed itself in inappropriate understanding of the role of missionaries and a false sense of security and spiritual achievement. In 1 Cor 3,8 the focus is not on what level of wages each receives from God, but only *that* God will pay them their wages. In 3,13-15 Paul does envisage a judgement of particular works (*Beurteilungsgericht*), which, while not endangering the builder's salvation, does mean that they will be "*am Ende beschämt ..., ja sie entkommen nur mit höchster Not dem Verderben*" (272). What might this imply? 3,16-17 threatens destruction to leaders who destroy the community. In 4,1-5 Paul rejects all human judgement (including his own) in favour of God's judgement, who will reward missionaries with praise.

In the case of incest (5,1) and the very difficult 5,5 Konradt argues that the giving over to Satan by exclusion from the congregation, sends the person into the realm of Satan which includes also exposure to suffering with a view to the individual's destroying his life in the flesh and through implied repentance coming (back) to life in the Spirit. In 6,1-11 Paul seeks to shame church members who had resorted to civil courts by asserting the role of believers in judging (probably declaring judgement on) the world and the fallen angels. Believers who resort to pagan courts are thus being warned that they are in danger of exclusion from the kingdom.

In Paul's handling of the issue of the strong and the weak in relation to food and the worship of pagan gods, Konradt finds no evidence of a judgement of believers. Paul does envisage judgement in the image of the athlete in 9,24-27, where after illustrating his own willingness for the sake of the gospel to forgo some rights, he implies that those who act in blatant disregard of the "weaker" members are in serious danger, but that danger is not of being judged as Christians, but as forfeiting their salvation altogether. Similarly the warnings in 10,1-14 and 15-22 about eating in temple restaurants and provoking divine jealousy are not about the future trial of Christians, but their total exclusion from salvation.

Likewise in 11,17-34 judgement of failure to express love among all members threatens discipline in the present (evident in sickness and some deaths; 11,30; cf. 5,5), but, if the discipline is not heeded, the judgement of condemnation along with unbelievers (11,32). Paul's closing anathema is to be seen as reassertion of the serious warnings addressed to the hearers.



Konradt concludes that in 1 Cor Paul uses judgement motifs to enhance boundary markers, where he saw resocialisation as incomplete and to challenge internal behaviours where he saw inadequate group cohesion.

The final sections of the book give consideration to other Pauline letters, with particular attention to 2 Cor 5,10 and Gal 5,13–6,10. Konradt rightly observes the similarity between 2 Cor 5,10 and 1 Cor 3 and 4. In both Paul is dealing with judgements about his own ministry and those of others. 5,10 is asserting that they too will need to give account, but he broadens it to include all believers. Konradt then resists the suggestion that we should see 5,10 as Paul's normal understanding (486).

In Gal he observes that 5,19–21 is to be read not as a general statement about all but as one tailored to abuses occurring in the Galatian church and that here and 6,7–10 the targets include those preaching circumcision. The positive fruit which the good sowers reap is not qualitatively differentiated, but simply eternal life.

On Rom 2,12–16 Konradt resists attempts to limit its application, for instance to Gentile believers, while noting that its rhetorical function relates to undermining the special privileges of the Jews before the judgement. It is nevertheless a universal judgement by works which envisages both negative and positive outcomes. There are difficulties when he relegates the motif to being “allein Argumentationsmittel” (507). Better is the comment that it is not an idea which Paul considers “obsolete” (509). Finally in a brief look at 12,19 and 14,10–13 Konradt argues that the focus is not reward for good deeds but accountability in judgement for wrong deeds and on leaving such judgement to God.

Konradt has given us a substantial, thoroughly researched analysis of a major issue in Pauline theology. The size of the book reflects his method of dealing with each instance through careful attention to its context, so that at points the work approaches the form of a commentary. The reader is richly rewarded and the findings, significant. When Paul speaks of judgement within the context of the mission proclamation, the focus is on judgement as *Vernichtungsgericht* on unbelievers, as reassurance for believers (as in 1 Thess) or as confrontation (as in 1 Cor), as Paul seeks to underline the difference between believers and the world. Believers who engage in the cardinal sins of sexual immorality, greed and idolatry run the real risk of being excluded from the kingdom. The man engaging in incest is an extreme example: he is cast out, but repentance is possible. Otherwise he will face the *Vernichtungsgericht* along with those who make a mockery of the eucharist (for which present judgement is now sickness and some deaths in the church) or engage in greed or what Paul argues in relation to eating in pagan temples as idolatry.

By contrast Paul does not employ the judgement motif to motivate good works among believers by promise of rewards. Where he speaks of Christians facing judgement as a hearing before God or Christ, it is in the context of evaluations of ministry. Here belong, in my view, also the allusions to reward in 1 Thess, and clearly 1 Cor 3 and 4, but also 2 Cor 5,10, in which, still in the context of defending ministry, Paul speaks of all having to give account and is more general about what is to be evaluated. The comments in Romans that we should not judge fellow believers but leave that to God assumes a similar

notion of judgement. Konradt also notes the absence of judgement but also of a general resurrection in 1 Cor 15 and 1 Thess 4, suggesting that had the idea of a universal judgement, such as we find in Rom 2,1-16, been central for Paul, we should expect to find it here.

Konradt's conclusions are less secure than his findings about what is in the texts. How does one interpret the absences? To what extent can one describe Paul's various statements as incompatible (521)? How far should one press the valid observation that Paul's statements about judgement are contextually determined? Are we dealing with ad hoc ideas for which we assume no coherence in Paul's thought? Motifs and images may be mutually incompatible by their very nature, but is it likely that Paul was inconsistent in some of the major matters of substance? This should never be ruled out in principle.

Some of our questions may ask more than the text allows us to answer. How, for instance, would Paul have envisaged a *Vernichtungsgericht*, especially if it is to apply to those already dead – is it literally *Vernichtung* or some kind of continuing wrath or punishment? Are the people concerned embodied, disembodied? What light would this shed on the valid observation that Paul speaks only of the resurrection of the righteous? Does it imply he did not espouse a resurrection of unbelievers for judgement or only that he saw no relevance for it in those particular contexts? Similarly does the failure to mention a general judgement, and a judgement of believers in particular, reflect that he envisages no such or do the few allusions we have provide a clue in the direction that he does see Christians needing to give account?

Absences can be eloquent, however, especially when they keep occurring where one might otherwise not expect them. This is the strength of Konradt's observation that in ethical exhortation to love, for instance, — and these are very frequent! — judgement day does not feature as a motivator. Nothing we have indicates that Paul envisaged an occasion of prize giving, despite the obvious assumption that our work will be acknowledged for its worth. The discussion has often been beset with worries about one particular stereotype which pictures judgement as a quantitative assessment of accumulated merit of good deeds against bad.

If Rom 2,1-16 is not to be sidelined as an aberration prompted by the necessities of a particular argument, then perhaps its author envisages a qualitative assessment based on the quality of relationship in faith, much as one might distinguish between an ongoing committed relationship in marriage (not perfection) and one's departure from that relationship, rather than on whether there have been sins or whether a valid wedding took place. Paul's focus on major relationship-breaching cardinal sins may point in this direction. Konradt's investigation certainly makes clear that Paul did not espouse the view that conversion ensured automatic and permanent salvation. The work leaves us with questions and provides an excellent basis for addressing them.

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Jonathan WHITLOCK, *Schrift und Inspiration*. Studien zur Vorstellung von inspirierter Schrift und inspirierter Schriftauslegung im antiken Judentum und in den paulinischen Briefen (WMANT 98). Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener, 2002. XVI + 508 p. 15 × 22,5.

This dissertation, directed by P. Stuhlmacher in the Tübingen Evangelical Theological Faculty, has a complex point of departure. To be sure, the classical texts 2 Tim 3,16-17 and 2 Pet 1,20-21 offer too small a basis for a satisfactory account of the self-understanding, in terms of inspired origin and applicability, present throughout Scripture itself. But casting the net more widely reveals that the issue of interpretation and application of previous traditions overshadows the question of the books' origins under the influence of a special work of God's Spirit. Following this lead, with concentration on the Pauline corpus, this study takes the texts of Israel's Scriptures as integral to Paul's exposition of God's action in Christ and of the present graces of Pauline communities (D.-A. KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums* [BHTh 69; Tübingen 1986]). Furthermore, beyond Paul's citations there is a subliminal presence of the LXX on which the Apostle constantly draws and in which, because of Christ, he discovers more than the text explicitly says about God's saving economy (R.B. HAYS, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven 1989]). But these understandings of Pauline interpretation still leave open the question that guides J. Whitlock's study: What is it in Israel's Scriptures that makes possible their major role in the Apostle's defense of his mandate and his instruction on life in accord with the Gospel of Christ?

The main portions of this study rest on study of significant Pauline texts, both those which cite the inherited Scriptures and others on how in Christ and by his Spirit the Apostle has grasped the economy of God's saving work and its attestation in the sacred texts. Its carefully drawn exegetical and theological conclusions merit being heard.

Before turning to Paul, J. Whitlock offers a seven-chapter survey of the traditions forming the background of how Paul qualified Israel's Scriptures and applied them. The authors of Zechariah, Nehemiah, and Chronicles look back on two stages during which God's word came to the people. Moses' intimacy with the Lord rendered unnecessary any specification of the Pentateuch as inspired history and precept. But after Moses the Lord continued to speak in the power of his Spirit through the prophets to actualize the graces and requirements of the Torah. Inspiration enters biblical discourse, not to account for composition of texts, but as the way in which prophetic spokesmen were empowered to serve the ongoing communication and application of the normative tradition begun on Sinai. In exilic times the figure emerges of the scribe skilled in the law, on whom the hand of the Lord rested (Ezra 7,6.11), thus featuring an inspired student and interpreter of what has been given, on whom the Lord will pour out a spirit of understanding for probing the sacred heritage (Sir 38,34b-39,8). Inspiration of biblical composition was explicitly affirmed by Philo and Flavius Josephus, but both were primarily offering an apologetic for Israel's Scripture, with Philo on behalf of further meanings contained in the written record and with Josephus

to undergird the reliability of biblical prophecy and history. Qumran enters the pre-history of Pauline use of Scripture, especially in the Peshier-exegesis of Habakuk and Nahum, which finds authentic meanings of older texts in inspired applications to the community in which eschatological promises of the Spirit have been realized. Against such conceptions, after 70 A.D. the rabbinic settlement laid down the dogmatic tenet that inspiration had ceased with the destruction of the First Temple, and so God's will can be known only through dedicated study of the Spirit-filled authoritative texts of the Torah and prophets.

In the tradition that Paul received, the eventual rabbinic delimitation of the Writings was not operative, for Sirach and Wisdom are inspired, although not on the same level as Psalms. This tradition was decisively shaped by Jesus, in applying Isa 61,1 to his own person and mission, as in Luke 4,17-21, and by his reinterpretation for the new era of God's reign of authoritative precepts, as now in Matt 5,21-48. The early apostolate delivered to Paul major axiomatic truths on the death and resurrection of Christ being "in accord with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15,3-4) and that "all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10,43). In the apostolate that Paul entered, time and energy was poured out on Scripture study. Many presentations of the results show a freedom in citing and combining texts (e.g. Rom 10,6-8) that could well count against belief in verbal inspiration, although at times a word, such as the singular τὸ σπέρματι of Gen 13,15, can serve in instruction (Gal 3,16).

The emblematic statement of Paul's understanding of Scripture follows his citation in Rom 15,3 of Ps 68,10, to characterize simultaneously Jesus' attitude in his passion and believers' rightful conduct in the community. Then the principle is stated: "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction" (15,4). Such a text lies behind the formulaic 2 Tim 3,16-17, but adds the significant dimension of παράκλησις which echoes the conviction of Judaism that by synagogue readings and homilies Scripture consoles the hearers. The principle receives ample illustration in 1 Cor on the events in the desert set down as "warnings for us" and "for our instruction" (10,6,11), a point which Rom 4,24 makes concerning Abraham's foreshadowing of Christian faith in the God who raised Jesus. A fundamental aspect of the Gospel was there. Paul is certain, even without reflection on compositional activity, that the Spirit framed the texts, especially the narratives, in such ways that attentive reading finds in them themes uniquely relevant to God's dealings now with the community of the final age assembled by the preaching of Christ's cross and resurrection.

Paul's "inspired interpretation" indicated the book's sub-title rests upon an insight operative in the Apostle's use of Israel's sacred texts, namely, that God's saving plan from the beginning was that the Gentiles will share in the eschatological blessings. This is the "secret and hidden wisdom" (1 Cor 2,7) that Paul imparts to the mature, where "wisdom" designates not only the "word of the cross" (1,18), Christ crucified (1,23; 2,1), and Paul's word and kerygma (2,4), but as well their universal saving import. The extension to the Gentiles underlies the complications of Rom 9-11, but appears concisely, including a reference to its intimation in the prophetic writings, in Rom 16,26 (for J. Whitlock not necessarily a later addition). After Paul, his disciples

stated this key to biblical revelation briefly in Col 1,25-27 and amply in Eph 3,3-11 on the *μυστήριον*.

J. Whitlock does not find helpful the designation of Paul's work as "charismatic exegesis", nor is there evidence for Paul receiving the key to Scripture during a mystical elevation. Paul was so taken up with the defense of his own apostolic mandate and with instructing the communities on their faith and a life worthy of the Gospel, that he does not say in his letters just how he came to his decisive grasp of the divine economy. The attractive thesis, developed in a central section (316-330), is that the personal revelation of Christ risen (Gal 3,12, 1 Cor 15,8) opened up for Paul manifold new perceptions of God's universal saving intent in the Scriptures that he re-read in the light of the encounter on the road to Damascus. The Scriptures then reach their intended addressees as they become part of the *διδασκαλία* to build up the communities of those made sharers in Christ and his Spirit by baptism.

The "epistemology" underlying both Paul's re-reading of the Scriptures and his teaching received dense expression in 1 Cor 2,6-16, where God's eternal plan is summarily designated as the *σοφία* first hidden but now manifest, because "revealed to us through the Spirit" (10). The Spirit is the essential enabler of Christian insight under apostolic teaching, which gives understanding of the gifts of God central to Christian instruction (12). The gifts are those which believers share in Christ crucified and risen, namely, "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1,30), which Paul interprets for those made capable by the Spirit of grasping God's work in the same Spirit (2,13b).

Thus, Paul introduces Scripture into his letters as texts in which the single saving economy has been present from the beginning, by a work of the same Spirit that permeates Christian instruction. To show Christ and the saving gifts of 1 Cor 1,30 as present in the Scriptures is instructive for Christians, but moreover such interpretation, Paul maintains, lets Israel's sacred texts become at last fully intelligible as witnesses to God's saving intent from the beginning.

Among other points made in treating Scripture and its interpretation in 2 Cor 2,14-4,4 (375-404), J. Whitlock takes 3,17, after probing other possibilities, as identifying Christ as "the Lord [who] is the Spirit", to maintain continuity with the preceding reference to Christ removing the veil that otherwise impedes understanding of Scripture (3,14d). With conversion to Christ, the Spirit enters the mind to make it perceptive of the real meaning of Israel's Scriptures, so that they become instruction for the community of the Gospel.

In the deuteropaulines, Ephesians, beyond its six citations, is close to the authentic letters in weaving its message from Scriptural vocabulary, which is present also in the hymn of Col 1,15-20. The Pastorals show less formative influence of Scripture study for Christian instruction, but do insist on its value in 2 Tim 3,15, where the designation *ἱερὰ γράμματα* echoes Philo and Josephus. The Scriptures impart God's wisdom unto salvation, which is, just as Paul would say, "through faith in Christ Jesus". The effect, "making wise", is what Ps 18,8-9 and 118,98 (LXX) affirm of the Torah. Expanding on the benefits of Scripture in 3,16-17, the author states a doctrinal principle which

assumes and expands Rom 15,4 by reference to *all* Scripture, to its divine origin, and to the full range of its formative influence among Christians. The term θεόπνευστος, unique in biblical Greek, designates what is among Paul's disciples simply taken to be the case without need of explanation. J. Whitlock takes the term as predicative, because linked by καί with the clearly predicative ὀφέλιμος, but its content is not greatly distant from Paul's own mode of introducing texts in Rom 10,21, 1 Cor 9,10, and 2 Cor 6,16 (εἶπεν ὁ θεός ...).

In a concluding chapter, J. Whitlock reviews the work of three recent writers on biblical inspiration. P.J. ACHTEMEIER, in *Inspiration and Authority. Nature and Function of Christian Scripture* (Peabody, Mass. 21999), expands the notion of inspiration to cover the whole communication of traditions and their reception with conviction instilled by the Spirit, without emphasis on textual composition. I.H. MARSHALL, in *Biblical Inspiration* (London 1982), is like Acheteimer in relating the Spirit to the complexities of textual origins, but postulates as well, without much explanation, a "concurive action" of the same Spirit with authors who set down God's word.

Better by far is the constructive conclusion of H. GABEL's *Inspirationslehre im Wandel* (Mainz 1991) which elaborates a pneumatology from biblical foundations to contextualize the redaction of biblical texts as one moment in God's revelatory self-communication. In a first moment the Spirit worked in the words and deeds of Jesus, especially his resurrection, and then secondly in the outpouring of gifts to constitute and animate the life of communities gathered by Gospel preaching. In a third moment, the Spirit works in the communication of the narratives, instruction, and encouragement that ground community identity and life, a communication carried out, among other agents, by charismatically endowed "servants of the word" (P. Grelot), some of whom render the service, of long-term significance, of fixing in writing central elements of community discourse, which in time became canonical texts. Thus Scripture and the Spirit are linked by a network of connections.

But J. Whitlock has himself presented elements of a wider framework, only weakly present in recent Catholic reflection, by concentrating on Paul's appropriation of the sacred texts of revelation to Israel, now studied in the light of Christ, in study based on convictions about the biblical word and its Christian applicability. The results of this monograph should play a role in the theology of biblical inspiration.

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# Varia

Eveline VAN STAALDUINE-SULMAN, *The Targum of Samuel* (Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture 1). Leiden: Brill 2002. xiv-767 p. 16 × 24,5.

La voluminosa obra de 767 páginas sobre el Targum de Samuel (TgSam) que nos ofrece E. van Staalduine-Sulman (la A.) está dividida en siete capítulos con sus correspondientes índices. En el primer capítulo, de carácter introductorio (1-48), la A. resume la aportación hasta el presente de los principales especialistas en el targum, principalmente en los targumes oficiales del Pentateuco (Onquelos), de los Profetas (Jonatán ben Uzziel) y en concreto la contribución de la Escuela de Hungría al estudio del TgSam. Como resultado de esta panorámica presenta el plan de su obra repartido en los seis capítulos siguientes.

En el breve capítulo segundo (49-62) trata de los manuscritos que ha empleado para su trabajo. Como texto base del TgSam ha usado el ms. Or. 2210 del Museo Británico editado por A. Sperber (con la corrección de las equivocaciones consonánticas del editor), añadiendo las variantes consonánticas de Sperber, de Martínez Borobio y de Kasher además de los seis manuscritos completos y las tres *haftarot* (ausentes en la edición de Sperber) que ha cotejado personalmente. El extenso capítulo tercero (63-138) versa sobre las formas exegéticas y de traducción que el TgSam emplea. En él la A. describe detalladamente los recursos retóricos, las figuras semánticas, las técnicas exegéticas y los motivos teológicos que descubre en el TgSam. El capítulo cuarto (139-183) lo consagra al estudio semántico de las palabras hebreas más significativas traducidas al arameo, así como las palabras arameas, objeto de la traducción. Los capítulos quinto (185-476) y sexto (577-699) contienen el cuerpo de la obra, que consiste en la edición del texto de Sperber del TgSam I y II con las variantes indicadas anteriormente, la traducción al inglés del texto arameo y un extenso comentario bibliográfico (litúrgico, lexicográfico, literario y exegético) de los diversos pasajes del TgSam con indicación de los paralelismos tomados de la literatura judía postbíblica y rabínica. En el séptimo y último capítulo (701-717) la A. presenta las conclusiones, sintetizándolas en los siguientes puntos: características exegéticas y literarias del TgSam; origen y formación de dicho Tg y sus elementos poéticos, proféticos y escatológicos. Siguen los índices de autores, de materias, de citas bíblicas y de la literatura judía.

De todos es sabido el auge que han tomado en estos últimos tiempos los estudios sobre la literatura targúmica como género rabínico propio, distinto de la literatura midrásica y talmúdica, sobre todo a causa de su relación con el mundo en que se forja el nacimiento y formación del cristianismo. Así pues, el trabajo de la A. sobre el TgSam es una aportación valiosa en este campo. La obra en sí es realmente extensa y compleja, y supone una larga y concienzuda labor de investigación. Para llevarla a cabo la A. ha utilizado una bibliografía muy completa sobre los diversos temas, objetos de estudio. Por ella se pueden descubrir los recursos literarios y el método hermenéutico que

usaban los judíos, especialmente R. Ismael y R. Aqiba, para interpretar la Biblia y del que se sirve en no pocas ocasiones la literatura neotestamentaria. En esta misma línea la aportación del TgSam para el conocimiento de la exégesis judía a partir del período postbíblico es muy importante. El TgSam completa los conocimientos de las tradiciones judías hagádicas referentes a los personajes protagonistas de los libros de Samuel como son, por ejemplo, Ana, Samuel, Saúl y especialmente David. No menos representativa es la exposición de la teología judía en la época en que se forman los Tgs oficiales (entre el 200 a.C. el 200 d.C.) y que encontrará su eco en el Nuevo Testamento. Por otra parte, la enorme extensión de este trabajo y especialmente la multitud de temas que aborda (tal vez hubiera sido preferible componerlo en dos volúmenes separados) dan una cierta impresión de superficialidad en cuanto a la manera de tratar determinadas materias. Se echa en falta, además, una sistematización más coherente del campo targúmico que la A. indaga. Por ello me permito añadir algunas acotaciones que creo importantes para una justa valoración de una obra tan significativa para la literatura targúmica actual.

En el capítulo introductorio, cuando la A. describe las opiniones de los autores sobre el Tg oficial (5-20), se echa de menos la gran contribución de A. Díez Macho sobre el estudio de los Tgs en general (en particular en sus dos obras: *Manuscritos hebreos y Arameos de la Biblia* [Roma 1971] y *El Targum* [Barcelona 1972], amén de las extensas y eruditas introducciones a los volúmenes del *Neofiti*), en los que corrige diferentes puntos de vista de Kahle así como de Kutscher y de Tal, aportando su propia visión sobre el origen y formación de los Tgs. En el segundo capítulo creo que aparecen algunos defectos de metodología que cito a continuación. Aunque hay muchos textos procedentes del Yemen vocalizados según la auténtica tradición babilónica, el texto de Sperber es un texto yemenita pero con vocalización tiberiense. El texto que publica Martínez Borobio, que la A. usa para las variantes, refleja la auténtica tradición babilónica y se completa con un manuscrito yemenita o del babilónico reciente (cf. I. Yeivin, *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization* [Jerusalén 1985]) que, siendo en gran parte tiberiense, contiene más elementos babilónicos que el manuscrito usado por Sperber. A pesar de tratarse de fragmentos de distintos mss., podría haberse usado como texto básico puesto que, críticamente hablando, es mucho mejor que el de Sperber, el cual, sin embargo, tiene la ventaja de ser un solo ms. (49-53). Además, no deja de sorprender que la A. no haya consultado el conocido ms. Urbinati I de la Vaticana ni el ms. 7542 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid. Asimismo se echa en falta un estudio comparativo entre los mss. de tradición oriental y occidental con sus diferencias y peculiaridades más destacadas. Por otra parte, hubiera sido muy instructivo para profundizar sobre la *Vorlage* del TgSm su cotejo con las antiguas versiones de la LXX, Peshitta y Vulgata en relación con el texto masorético (TM), como también un estudio más concienzudo sobre la lengua aramea de este Tg (37-38).

En el capítulo tercero la A. se detiene en describir figuras retóricas, la mayoría de las cuales son idénticas a las del texto hebreo (63-86). En mi opinión, en el estudio del Tg lo que interesa es señalar los aspectos específicos y diferenciales del Tg más que los coincidentes con el TM que traduce



interpretando, por lo que, debido también a la similitud lingüística del hebreo y del arameo, habría sido más útil resaltar los pasajes que sólo el TgSam vierte de forma poética. En cuanto a las técnicas exegeticas (87-128), es importante distinguir entre la exégesis, que es el objetivo del targumista, y el método hermenéutico, que comprende los recursos empleados para obtener determinados objetivos exegeticos. A este método yo le llamaría, según la tradición judía, el método derásico. La clasificación que la A. hace de cambios semánticos, sustitución, plus, etc. como elementos del método formal (91) resulta un tanto aleatoria y subjetiva. Por otra parte, creo que el método formal se identifica con lo que la A. llama técnicas exegeticas, mientras las motivaciones se reflejan en los objetivos del targumista (90-93).

El doble objetivo del targumista es, como constata la A. (98-109), dar en la traducción aramea un sentido claro y actualizado del TM, al cual sigue verbalmente con sus variantes y complementos. No hay que olvidar, sin embargo, que lo fundamental para el Tg es la comprensión clara y actual del texto por parte del oyente o lector/a. La claridad exige una exposición diáfana de pasajes oscuros o corrompidos del TM; la actualización del texto sagrado implica para el targumista una adaptación histórico-hagádica, toponímica, jurídico-halákica y teológica a los conocimientos, sentimientos y tendencias doctrinales de la época o épocas del TgSam. Esta actualización targúmica provoca interpretaciones realistas de las metáforas, armonización del texto, polarización de sus personajes..., en fin una serie de adaptaciones que exigen unos recursos hermenéuticos derásicos, difícilmente clasificables según nuestra lógica. Ahora bien, lo definitivo e importante es, a mi entender, la exégesis que a través de ellos el TgSam nos ofrece, pues estos recursos tienen siempre un valor relativo en función del doble objetivo. La A. ha presentado una clasificación moderna que no deja de ser orientadora; sin embargo, a veces da la sensación de mezclar la exégesis con la hermenéutica (94-128). Sin duda, como ella misma advierte, el targumista tiene en cuenta para su interpretación especialmente el contexto. De ahí que cuando éste, según el Tg, exige cambios gramaticales, lexicales, estilísticos, paráfrasis o glosas lo realiza sin trabas, a pesar de ser un texto sagrado, siguiendo el método derásico. Uno de los recursos más comunes es el llamado *al tigre*, en el que se produce un claro cambio intencionado de vocales o consonantes en función de la interpretación, y que parece poco valorado por la A. (95, 99).

Debido a la importancia interpretativa del TgSam, habría sido deseable una exposición más completa y sistemática de la exégesis, o sea del objetivo actualizante del targumista en los diversos campos indicados, pero sobre todo en el campo teológico doctrinal. Que la A. trate en un mismo apartado el tema de la reverencia a Dios y a su pueblo (121-128) resulta inadecuado. Siguiendo la doctrina judía, el targumista resalta la unicidad y trascendencia divinas, que no coinciden con la idealización del pueblo escogido y de sus componentes. Sería más lógico que la A. hubiera dedicado un capítulo entero a la teología del TgSam, clasificándolo a partir de los grandes temas de la religión judía: la unidad y trascendencia de Dios, Israel como pueblo elegido, el don de la Torá, la misión del profeta, la escatología y el mesianismo (cf. J. Ribera, *Traducción del Targum de Jeremías* [Biblioteca Midrásica 12; Estella, Navarra 1992]).

Por otro lado, basándose en la utilísima obra de J. De Moor (ed.), A

*Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets* (Leiden 1995-2003), la A. presenta una interpretación muy sugestiva de las palabras más significativas del hebreo y su traducción interpretada aramea, así como el uso de los términos arameos más señalados del TgSam con unas conclusiones que son un bosquejo de la exégesis sugerida por el examen de estos términos.

En cuanto al cuerpo de la obra, no deja de sorprender que en la edición del ms. 2210 de Sperber la A. haya caído en el mismo fallo con el que tropezó su colega W.F. Smelik en *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden 1995), por tantas razones excelente, al editar únicamente la parte consonántica prescindiendo de la vocalización. En este aspecto la obra de Sperber es mucho más completa y crítica, ya que la vocalización en no pocos casos puede cambiar o matizar el sentido morfológico e incluso semántico de un lexema. La vocalización de los targumes oficiales era una de las preocupaciones de los rabinos que llegaron incluso a confeccionar una masora propia de Onquelos. Con los recursos de la actual informática es difícil justificar una tal ausencia. Por lo que respecta a la traducción en inglés, se podrían haber indicado por medio de algún recurso de imprenta (con letras itálicas, negrita...) las variantes textuales con respecto al TM. De este modo, el lector/a podría reconocer fácilmente las variantes y glosas targúmicas. Así lo hizo R. Le Déaut en su *Targum du Pentateuque* (París 1978-1981, 6 vols) y así lo han hecho, siguiendo su ejemplo, los traductores de la colección *The Aramaic Bible. The Targums* (ed. M. McNamara) (Edinburgh – Wilmington 1981-). También habría resultado más sistemático hacer un doble apartado en las notas: uno referente a las variantes que ofrecen los mss. cotejados y otro apartado sobre las referencias bibliográficas y comentarios de determinadas palabras o pasajes.

Con todo, estas apostillas y sugerencias no mermán en modo alguno el valor y el mérito de este libro, puesto que se trata de una obra totalmente indispensable para el conocimiento de la literatura targúmica reflejada en el TgSam. Sólo me resta felicitar a la Universidad Teológica de Kampen (Holanda) por la extraordinaria contribución que está aportando en el campo targúmico, especialmente de los Profetas. Basta citar las obras de W.F. Smelik, de E. van Staaldvine-Sulman y la *Bilingual Concordance* antes mencionada.

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# NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM

## Diccionario griego-español del Nuevo Testamento (DGENT)

The appearance of the first fascicles of *DGENT*<sup>(1)</sup> is an event of considerable significance, not only for the field of biblical studies in the Spanish-speaking world, but also for the discipline of Greek lexicography in general. It is probably fair to say that no other lexicon of the Greek NT has been preceded by a more extensive and diverse research program, both with respect to theoretical reflection and in the practical task of producing textual work. On a practical level, Juan Mateos was the NT translator of *Nueva Biblia Española*, which first appeared in 1975 and which established itself as a learned and literate version. Moreover, he has produced various monographs of exegetical and linguistic character as well as supervised several similar works that contribute to our understanding of NT lexicography. Jesús Peláez too has authored some important publications, in particular, *Metodología del Diccionario griego-español del Nuevo Testamento* (1996), which serves as an introduction to *DGENT*. This monograph includes a penetrating evaluation of the standard lexicons (Zorell, Bauer, Louw – Nida), as well as a patient treatment of the theory, principles, and methods behind the production of the present dictionary. Thus the user of *DGENT* can be confident that this work is not the result of a hit-and-miss approach but is rather based on a systematic and consistent study of Greek lexicography.

The present work's subtitle indicates that the fascicles now appearing do not constitute the lexicon proper but rather present a very full semantic analysis of the NT vocabulary. (The two fascicles, extending to 594 columns, cover only as far as ἀνὴρ) Not only do the individual articles provide a detailed classification of the terms, including their "semic developments", but they also give, in most cases, a full quotation and translation of every NT occurrence (except, of course, in the case of terms that occur with very high frequency). A future one-volume work will synthesize the data and add other kinds of information (such as verbal forms and extrabiblical data).

The treatment of the word ἀνὴρ (cols. 585-94) will help to illustrate the distinctives of *DGENT*. This article begins with a classificatory description: "nominal lexeme that denotes a male human individual (= Entity) and [gives] precision with respect to his age (= Determination)". This statement serves to identify both the word's "grammatical species" (i.e., part of speech: nominal lexeme or noun) and its "semantic species" (i.e., the broad conceptual category to which it belongs: Entity is the category of beings, while

<sup>(1)</sup> *Diccionario griego-español del Nuevo Testamento. Análisis semántico de los vocablos*. Dirigido por Juan Mateos, con la colaboración de Jesús Peláez y del Grupo de Análisis Semántico de la Universidad de Córdoba (GASCO). Fascículos 1, 2. Córdoba, Ediciones El Almendro, 2000, 2002.

Determination is the category of lexemes that serve to delimit the sense). Immediately following, the article provides a general definition that includes both a metalinguistic description — “an individual human being of masculine sex who has reached full physical development” — and suggested Spanish glosses (*varón adulto*, *hombre* = adult male, man).

Next, the article provides a “semantic formula”, which in the present case is very simple: “E + D”, with the information that “E” (Entity) includes the semantic components of individuality, humanity, and masculinity, whereas “D” (Determination) includes only that of adulthood. Then the definition is repeated, but making explicit how the semantic components relate to it. (Sometimes the formulas are complex, including various arrows, brackets, etc.; thus the need to show how the definition takes into account the various components).

At this point, the article moves to differentiate among several “sememes” (or meanings). Thus sememe I is the generic meaning that corresponds to the definition already given. Over thirty references are listed first where the term is used in an unremarkable way, but then ten additional subcategories are included, such as instances where it is joined to a personal name (e.g., Luke 8,41), where it occurs as part of a vocative (e.g., Acts 1,11), where it is found near or in parallel with *ἄνθρωπος* (Luke 5,18 and 6,6,8), or contrasted with *γυνή* or *νήπιος* (Acts 5,14; 1 Cor 13,11), or combined with *τις* (e.g., Luke 8,27), or used as “practically equivalent to a generic substantive or an indefinite pronoun” (e.g., Luke 5,8; Acts 6,11). Especially noteworthy is subcategory 7, “Contrasted with God, the seme of masculinity is neutralized” (col. 589), with Jas. 1,20 given as the illustrative reference (Louw – Nida §9.1 regards this as a distinct sense, illustrating with Rom 4,8 and, less certainly, Matt 14,35).

Sememe II receives this definition (col. 591): “Individual human male, having reached adulthood and characterized by some special quality”, with suggested glosses *señor*, *personaje*, *personalidad* (these Spanish terms correspond roughly to “gentleman” or “important person”). We are told that this is a “seme” of distinction or importance added to the word by the context, and four references are given (Luke 9,30; Acts 11,12; 25,23; Jas 2,2). Not everyone will agree that in these cases the meaning contributed by the sentence as a whole establishes a distinct sense for *ἄνθρωπος*, but at least it is made clear that we are dealing with a contextual meaning, not one intrinsic to the term itself. (I personally might prefer to regard this use as a subcategory under the first sememe. Conversely, there are times when *DGENT* fails to give sememic status to what should probably be considered a distinct meaning, such as “resurrection” for *ἀνάστασις*).

Sememe III is defined thus (col. 592): “Adult male who is, or is about to be, conjugally joined to a woman” (*hombre casado*, *esposo*, *marido*, *novio* = “married man, spouse, husband, bridegroom”). Seventeen references are listed (e.g., Matt 1,16; Mk 10,2), with special note taken of three passages where the noun is qualified with *ἰδιος* (1 Cor 7,2; 14,35; Eph 5,22). It should be added that both sememes II and III are also represented by semantic formulas and related information.

Even a brief comparison with the standard lexicons shows clearly that *DGENT* is characterized by independent thinking and that its handling of the

data — in terms of both organization and interpretation — sheds valuable light on the material. Moreover, the use of a combination of careful definitions on the one hand and judicious glosses on the other will be of considerable aid to exegetes as well as translators. These qualities can be illustrated with reference to the adjective ἀγαθός, which in BDAG is regarded to having two meanings: (1) “pert. [pertaining] to meeting a relatively high standard of quality” (of things), with the glosses “useful, beneficial”; and (2) “pert. to meeting a high standard of worth and merit”, with the gloss “good”. This second meaning is subdivided into (a) “of humans and deities (the primary focus is on usefulness to humans and society in general)”, with the gloss “beneficent”, but also “good, kind, generous”, and (b) “of things characterized esp. in terms of social significance and worth”, with a variety of contextual renderings. (Here I leave aside the substantival uses).

In contrast, *DGENT* views these three meanings as separate and handles them as follows (cols. 9, 10, 12). (1) “When ἀγαθός is used of the person as such (contextual factor) it has an ethical sense”, thus it is defined as “Possessing a disposition of spirit that is favorable to ... others, manifested in conduct toward them” (glosses “good, beneficent, kind, benevolent, honest, generous”). (2) “When it is used of a personal subject defined by his activity (contextual factor), ἀγαθός has a professional sense: it denotes then the satisfactory or excellent way ... in which he exercises his office or profession”. This sense has two subcategories, depending on whether the subject renders a quality of service that corresponds to what is expected (“diligent, industrious, reliable”) or whether he performs a function that requires special ability and qualification (“competent, notable, illustrious, eminent, excellent”). (3) “With an impersonal subject (contextual factor), it denotes that the subject possesses the appropriate quality ... and/or is beneficial for” human beings (“good, of good quality, upright, beneficial”). This third meaning receives a very large number of classified examples.

Examining a variety of other terms reveals additional helpful features. For example, the treatment of what we may call “function words”, such as conjunctions and prepositions (one can argue that these belong not in a lexicon but in a grammar!), is rich. Thus the authors identify seven distinct sememes for ἀλλά (cols. 329-46), depending on whether the conjunction expresses an objection, introduces a limitation, opposes two situations, denotes an excluding opposition (when the first clause is a negative or a question), expresses emphasis after a negative (Semitism), introduces a theme change, or introduces an exhortation.

In the case of terms that are associated with theological content, *DGENT* sometimes seems to blur the distinction between linguistic meaning and encyclopedic information. Thus, for instance, ἀγαπάω first receives this definition: “To be favorably disposed to a person who is esteemed and to manifest [that disposition] by procuring his welfare” (col. 23). It is an interesting question whether the last clause of this definition should be regarded as part of the word’s meaning or as an exposition of the biblical *concept* of love. Less defensible (in a linguistic dictionary) is the elaboration in the following column: “The disposition denoted by ἀγαπάω is born not of an impulse, but of a free act of will that chooses its object and actively seeks the object’s welfare”.

Treatments of verbs sometimes make note of aspectual distinctions. For the verb ἀγανακτέω, for instance, we are told that the aorist has an inchoative sense (e.g., Matt 20,24). Less helpful are the aspectual comments regarding ἀγαθοποιέω: “The present verbal form underlines the habitual character of the activity” (five references, such as 1 Pet. 2,15, where the present participle is used), while “The aorist verbal form denotes a concrete action, raised in context to a general principle” (Luke 6,9, aorist infinitive). While it is true enough that the present aspect typically couches the action as “in progress”, it says nothing about the objective character of that action (in other words, the same historical event could just as easily be expressed with either aspect). Moreover, to mention the obvious, the sense of the adverbial participle is as a rule so tightly related to the main verb, that the aorist participle (because it primarily presents the action as a complete whole) ordinarily refers to action prior to that of the main verb. Thus, in most of the five references listed, the writers could not have easily used the aorist without altering the temporal reference, and to the degree that a speaker’s options are reduced, to that degree the semantic content is weakened, for meaning depends on choice. Finally, it cannot be assumed (as the user of the dictionary would probably infer on the basis of the formulation used) that the aspectual force of a verb is the same in the various moods. (I might also note that this work sometimes refers to the aorist with the traditional descriptive *punctual*, a term that almost always misleads the reader, as though the objective action in view were momentary or “once-for-all”, etc.).

Considering how much *DGENT* offers the reader, it seems unfair to call attention to what is missing. Nevertheless, if the material presented here is to be used properly, one must be fully conscious of what it is not intended to do.

In the first place, its sharp focus on the very restricted corpus that is the NT, while allowing for a magnificent level of detail, risks distortion by isolating this material from Hellenistic Greek more generally. Presumably, this weakness will be mitigated to some degree when extrabiblical data are incorporated into the final stage of the project. It remains true, however, that the development of the semantic analysis itself proceeds as though the language of the NT writers were limited by the actual use preserved in the books written by them (there are exceptions, as when one of the uses of ἀγιάζω is described with reference to the LXX, cols. 58-62). This is especially a problem with regard to terms that occur relatively few times in the NT but that are common in the Koine. It seems problematic to define those terms and provide a semantic analysis of them strictly on the basis of the few NT occurrences, when in fact the linguistic consciousness of the NT writers (and of the original NT readers) would have been informed by the broader picture.

Second, the treatment of individual words is done in relative isolation from terms that have a close semantic relationship to them. This is rather surprising, because the last chapter of *Metodología* had offered a very promising treatment of one semantic field (δῆμος, λαός, ἔθνος, φυλή, πατριά). Certainly *DGENT* does not pretend to be a dictionary of “semantic domains” and we should not expect it to be one. But insofar as J. Trier was right that “the value of a word is first known when we mark it off against the value of neighbouring and opposing words” (*Der deutsche Wortsatz im*

*Sinnbezirk des Verstandes* [Heidelberg: Winters, 1931], 6), semantic field data should play a role in the analysis of lexical meaning and thus in the definition of terms. Of course, how to implement this principle given the size limitations of a standard lexicon and the need to preserve an alphabetical layout is not a simple question! At the very least, however, readers need some type of cross-referencing that will help keep before them the networks of semantic associations that make lexical meaning possible.

I must stress, in conclusion, that neither these desiderata nor my minor criticisms call into question for a moment the wonderful achievements of *DGENT*. There is no lexicon of the Greek NT — indeed, so far as I know, of any ancient literature — that provides a more adequate description than this one. The authors and collaborators are to be warmly congratulated for their contribution and to be given great encouragement as they seek to bring their work to a successful end.

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